



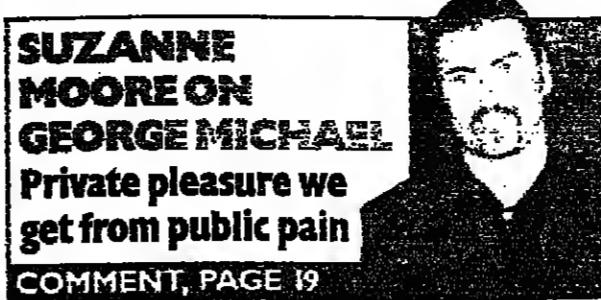
NO MORE TRAUMA FOR MIRANDA RICHARDSON
Why she's giving up neurotic roles

THE EYE



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The only female Catholic priest speaks out

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... plus our prize jumbo crossword

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THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 10 April 1998 45p (IR50p) No 3,581 *

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

British and Irish governments in last-minute search for final elements to seal historic peace agreement

Eyes of the world on Ulster

By David McKittrick

Ireland Correspondent

NORTHERN Ireland was on the brink of an historic pact spanning both Unionism and republicanism last night as the long-running political talks seemed to be moving towards success.

The eyes of the world were on the Stormont talks complex in Belfast throughout the day as Tony Blair and the Irish prime minister, Bertie Ahern, nudged and cajoled the parties towards agreement.

Last night, they appeared to have succeeded as Unionist leader David Trimble received the endorsement of his party executive for the emerging deal, winning two standing ovations. But there were ugly signs of things to come when flag-waving loyalist protesters jostled police in Belfast city centre and later blocked the gates of Stormont.

The first sign of a breakthrough was reported at 6pm by Ulster Unionist deputy

splintering on the issue within Sinn Fein and the IRA; the calculation of Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams will be that most of the potential dissidents have now gone, and that the accord can be successfully sold to the republicans who remain.

But considerable dissent is already visible on the Unionist side, where the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, is vowing to smash whatever agreement should emerge. Last night, in a classic Paisley scare story, he announced that an agreement would mean officially sanctioned paramilitary policing. "You're going to have gunmen in uniform being policemen," he declared.

Mr Trimble's meeting last night with his party executive – at which he received the ovations – was clearly designed to cover himself against allegations of reaching an agreement without properly taking soundings from the grassroots. Such accusations have, in the past, proved damaging, and on occasions politically fatal for previous Unionist leaders.

The first official admission that the talks might not be complete by the midnight deadline came, bizarrely, from Kentucky, where President Clinton's spokesman, Mike McCurry, said the President had been told by Mr Mitchell that "agreement is near but the talks will probably go past the deadline".

Last night, the two governments were planning to produce another paper in succession to that delivered to the parties by talks chairman George Mitchell earlier this week. This would represent a near-final version of an agreement.

Tony Blair's official spokesman said the Prime Minister believed that agreement could be reached by the midnight deadline: "I think he feels there is an irresistible force, and an immovable object; and the irresistible force will prevail."

Gerry Adams said his party had submitted amendments and texts on areas of difficulty which included British constitutional change, the shape of all-Ireland institutions, policing, prisoners and other issues.

Monica McWilliams, leader of the Women's Coalition, said tensions inside the talks were running high but insisted a deal was possible.

Mr Paisley's deputy, Peter Robinson, said: "We are not a part of this process because it was very clear the Government wanted to do a deal with terrorists, who were busy hustling kneecaps, shooting and even bombing. They wanted to do a deal with terrorists in order to silence their guns."

Mr Taylor's assessment was endorsed by the SDLP deputy leader, Seamus Mallon, who said: "I think there's going to be a deal. I hope it will be tonight." The Ulster Democratic Party leader, Gary McMichael, added: "It looks as though that nut has been cracked."

Agreement in the talks, though vital, represents only the beginning of an arduous political process which will entail placing the agreement before the electorate for endorsement for referendums in Northern Ireland and the Republic.

Success will also depend on all the elements involved receiving the approval of their grassroots. There has already been some comparatively minor

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Waiting for word: Tony Blair and Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam at Stormont last night as the deadline neared

Photograph: John Giles/PA

Four hundred years of bloody history: how do you explain that in a soundbite?

By Donald MacIntyre in Belfast

"WHAT my station will want to know is what divides the two sides," a Danish television journalist explained to a British colleague, vainly hoping for an answer.

It looked increasingly likely yesterday that the "two sides" had managed to find common ground – but then, to muddle the waters, police had to seal the gates of Stormont Castle as scores of demonstrators – many thought to be followers of the Rev Ian Paisley – arrived on the scene to register their protest at they way things appeared to be going.

If the Danish journalist was already confused then here was further evidence of the deep scars of Ireland's 400 years of blood-stained history. And if he meant what ex-

actly was going on behind the grim exterior of the castle buildings, there were no definite answers to that either.

A ragged village of Portakabins, makeshift canvas "studios", a marquee with trestle tables for laptops, cups of coffee and lukewarm sausage rolls signified what journalists of the Troubles said was the largest international media presence seen in Northern Ireland. A dozen satellite dishes beamed out impromptu press conferences given by party delegations.

Earlier the Prime Minister's official spokesman, Alastair Campbell, had used the temporary briefing room to give an optimistic progress report after officials had ensured that microphones and cameras were switched off. Gnomic utterances, supplemented by furtive mobile phone calls to the parties inside the building formed

the basis of such journalistic wisdom as there was to be had. The battery of reporters clearly visible to the talks participants inside the building appeared last night to be one of the pressures forcing the parties closer together.

As the temperature started to plummet after a freak snowfall, there were rumours of a televised signing ceremony sometime in the small hours of Good Friday. There was spin, and counter-spin, from all the parties but very little hard wording from the detailed documents under discussion.

Everybody knew that Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, the Taoiseach, were inching the parties towards the kind of historic breakthrough which the 1970s Sunningdale Agreement had tried, and in the end, failed to be, but nobody could yet be quite sure how and when it would really end.

Camera-shy Cook marries in secret



ROBIN Cook pulled off a coup yesterday when he wrong-footed the media by marrying his fiancée, Gaynor Regan, 10 days earlier than expected, writes Paul Abrams.

One witness said the Foreign Secretary punched the air in delight when he emerged from the register office in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, just after 8.30am and found no photographers waiting outside.

The timing of the marriage could not have been better. With the Northern Ireland peace talks nearing a climax and Parliament closed for the Easter recess, publicity about the event was kept to a minimum.

There were also rumours

that Mr Cook had pulled off a further victory over his ex-wife Margaret, from whom he was divorced last month. A newspaper report yesterday claimed she was about to pub-

lish a book about a political marriage and that its serialisation in a newspaper – believed to be the *Sunday Times* – was to be announced just before 19 April.

Yesterday, Dr Cook was at work at St John's Hospital in Edinburgh. She said she did not want to comment on the marriage, but added: "I suppose I wish them well."

The Foreign Office statement said: "The couple will be holding a celebration for family and close friends. They will have a honeymoon over the Easter recess before Mr Cook goes back to his desk as Foreign Secretary at this busy time for Britain's foreign policy."

More than 100 Muslim pilgrims die in Saudi stampede

MORE THAN 100 Muslim pilgrims were crushed to death in a stampede at the hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia yesterday, the last official day of the sacred Islamic rite.

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THE BEST READING
THIS EASTER WEEKEND

SATURDAY

- William Boyd talks exclusively on how he hoaxed New York
- Raise a glass: vintage grapes from Bordeaux
- Homes: why now is the time to buy
- The first Noël: never before seen pictures of The Master



INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

- The Blair audit: Anthony Bevins on how New Labour performed in its first year of government
- Seafood special: Part One of the ultimate guide by Sophie Grigson and William Black
- PLUS Your chance to win a state-of-the-art Olympus digital cameras worth £1,300



MONDAY

- A brand new short story by Kathy Lette
- Salman Rushdie interviewed by Susan Chereny
- Mr Punch: from dentist's waiting room to muckraker



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Comment	19	TV & radio	The Eye 12



Recycled paper
made up 41% of
the raw material
for UK newspapers
in the
first half of 1997.

Four-year switchback of hope and despair

David McKittrick tracks the road that led to yesterday's cliffhanger

THE last four years in Northern Ireland have been an extraordinary roller-coaster ride with peaks and troughs of progress and setbacks, of violence and politics, of sporadic despair and enduring hope.

The peace process which eventually brought about the first IRA ceasefire of August 1994 was perhaps the time of maximum hope, holding as it did the promise that the Troubles had finally entered their endgame - a hope strengthened when loyalist groups reciprocated a few months later.

But 1995 proved to be a year of activity rather than progress, as political wrangling slowed down the pace. Unionists were against entering talks with Sinn Fein, and John Major, as prime minister, was unwilling or unable to prop up everyone to the conference table.

By February 1996, the IRA lost patience and, accusing the Government of bad faith, broke its ceasefire with the London Docklands bomb.

What followed, however, was not a return to a full-scale IRA campaign but rather what one republican called "strictly modulated military activity" - a lower level of violence which seemed aimed at marking time until the next general election.

In the meantime, community relations were poisoned by Drumcree '96, when loyalists successfully protested against

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and buffeted by bouts of violence from the outside. December of last year, and January of this, brought a security crisis which threatened to draw the major paramilitary groups back into major violence.

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Heartland waits to be convinced

By Kim Sengupta
in Portadown

THERE will be no peace in Northern Ireland without Portadown. This fiercely proud heartland of loyalism has to be convinced that the agreement being hammered out at Stormont has something to offer them, and is not just a sell-out of Protestant interests camouflaged in rhetoric.

Portadown has come to symbolise what is seen as Loyalist intransigence and sectarianism. This is the hometown of Billy Wright, leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force murdered in the Maze, who do not recognise and are not taking part in the Mitchell negotiations.

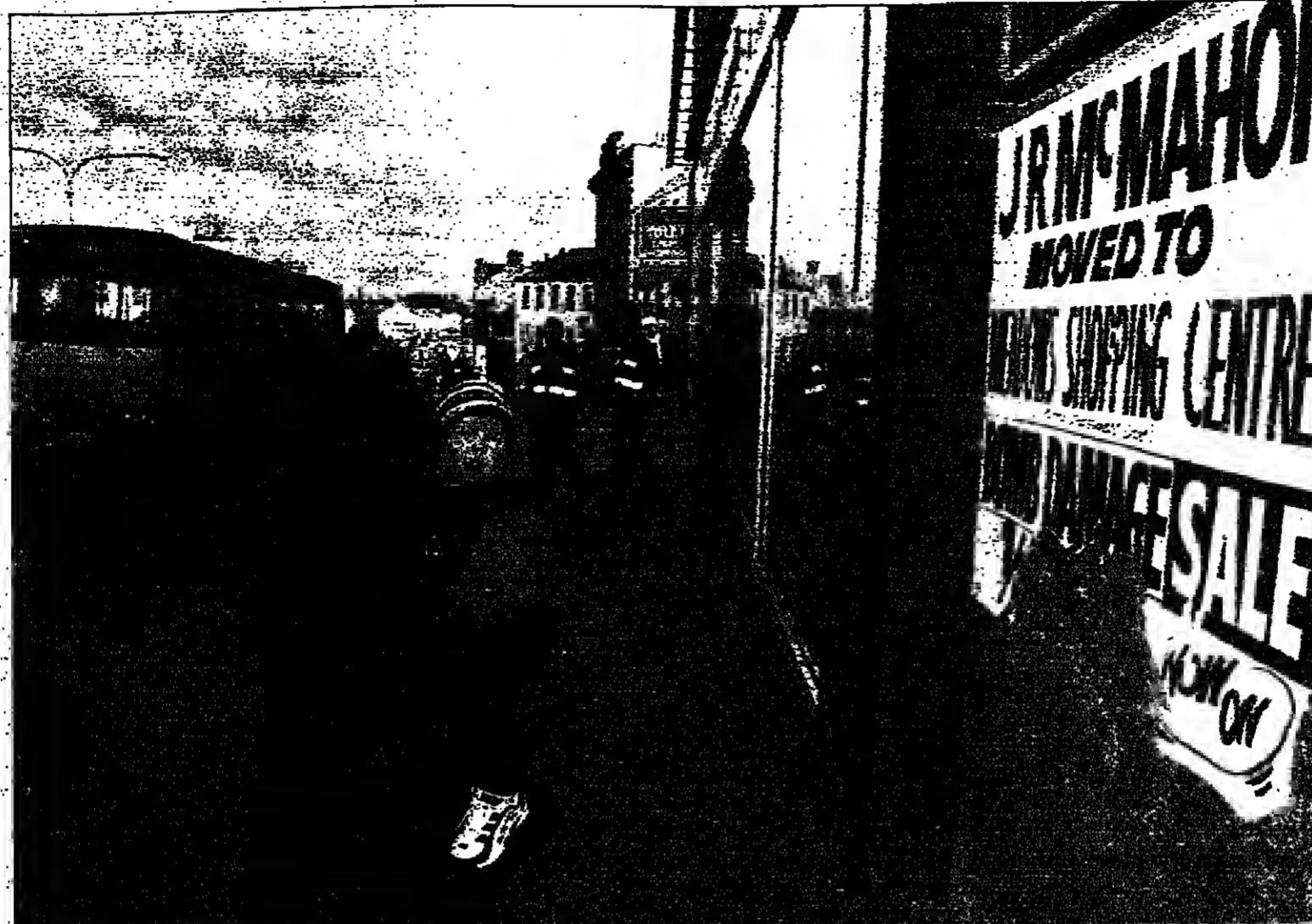
Drumcree is just two miles away and preparations are already under way for the annual Orange Parade on the Garvagh Road, with all its potential for confrontation and conflict.

But many of this city's Protestants, who make up 73 per cent of the population, maintain that it is they who are discriminated against and are the real victims of the Troubles.

The Loyalist housing estates of Portadown mourn the martyrdom of Wright. Slogans on the walls over neatly painted kerbstones in red, blue and white declare "Not talking but walking - Drumcree", "LVF, the true defenders", and the old battle cry of "No Surrender".

At the Edgerton housing estate, where Wright used to drink at the Golden Hind, a man wearing gold chains and sporting an armful of tattoos said: "If [David] Trimble and his kind sell out Ulster, people will know there is nothing left to lose, there will be war."

The man added: "There is plenty of everything around from talking to people, guns, plastics, no problem."



Shoppers in David Trimble's home town of Portadown hunt for bargains in the bomb-damaged sales in the wake of last month's 500lb car bomb. Photograph: Pacemaker

The LVF was born out of the mid-Ulster unit of the Ulster Volunteer Force when the parent body expelled it after a bitter dispute over a pre-Drumcree march. Following Wright's killing it went on a murder spree of Republicans and Catholics.

"We support them," said Margaret, a housewife. "They're the only ones who are

prepared to look after us. Billy Wright was a good man, he did a lot for the community."

Billy Wright's grandfather was elected an alderman in Portadown. He stood as an Independent. Billy grew up with Catholics, and even in his days as a para-military commander claimed that he was not sectarian. What would happen if a

Catholic walked in here? After knowing smiles one said: "He wouldn't be walking out of here." What about after a peace settlement? "He wouldn't be walking out of here."

Gangs of Protestant and Catholic youths have been involved in skirmishes in the city's High Street mall. Allan Wilson, 36, a Protestant self-employed

businessman, said: "We never had this before. Hardly a sign of progress is it? I doubt if the peace deal is going to work, it seems to me that one side is getting everything and the other nothing. The Protestant people are losing out."

The Catholic minority in the city are guardedly optimistic about the future. A

woman from a Catholic estate said: "Both sides have got to make compromises. It is silly to say that all Catholics support Sinn Fein or the IRA. But we certainly do not like to see all the troubles that come with the Orange marches. That's the trouble with this country, there are too many memories and not enough looking forward."

Bitter experience puts hope on hold

By Andrew Buncombe
in the Falls Road, Belfast

FOR at least an hour yesterday afternoon the sun was blazing in the Falls Road as Tricolours, tied to every other lamppost, fluttered wildly and the wind kicked up the dust.

Kathleen McPeake was heading home from the shops with the youngest of her three sons. "I don't know if there can ever be an agreement," she said. "There is talk of compromise but things here have been the same for so long I don't know if people can agree."

"Things" on the Falls Road in west Belfast, refer to what the republican community sees as the continuing intransigence of the Protestants.

As individuals they might be very nice people, but as a community, how can you trust them? It was the same in their parents' day and in the days of their parents' parents as well. In this way, the new oral history continues.

Not that Mrs McPeake, 51, is overly negative. "Something has to be done. My three children were brought up in the Troubles and I don't want it to be the same for my grandchildren." But while she desperately hopes for a fair settlement, like

so many others her hopes are tempered by scepticism.

As she spoke an army patrol emerged from the RUC station on the other side of the street. Half a dozen soft-faced boys in camouflage dodged down the road, eyes darting left and right, guns to their shoulders. Every one looked 17 years old.

Mrs McPeake didn't blink. It might have been another clichéd image of Northern Ireland, but for her it is a way of life. A little further into the estate at the BLT Bakery a girl was making sandwiches while the radio played Bruce Springsteen.

"I don't think many people

are really bothered what happens," she said, carefully spreading the slices with margarine from a large plastic tub. "I have got Protestant friends, I go disco-dancing with them. It makes no difference to me."

But it would be wrong to try and make some simple distinction between the views of one generation and the next in the nationalist community, and worse still to try and portray the community as speaking with one voice. Every person seems to have a different opinion and every person a different perspective.

One man, a self-employed welder, talked of his support for

the extremist breakaway groups such as Continuity IRA and the INLA. He said he thought they were doing a good job "whacking" the loyalists.

Ann Bradley, who works in a newsagent's, recalled how her brother was murdered by the loyalists in 1972, and his body left in the Protestant Shankill Estate.

"But I don't think all people from the Shankill are bad people," she said. "There are a lot of good people."

Bronagh Best, a 12-year-old heading home from school in her brown uniform, told how she preferred All Saints to the Spice Girls. And she added: "I think there should be peace in the world and we can all be friends and live together."

The sun did not last long. By 5pm, a light snow shower had blown in from the mountains and in the shadow of the euphemistically titled "Peace Wall", Lorraine Liddlester, 19, told how she dreamt of moving out of the province when she finished her business administration course.

"A lot of people want to get out," she said. "But would a settlement 10 miles away at Stormont Castle encourage her to stay? "Yes," she said. "I think it might."

One man, a self-employed welder, talked of his support for



Something has to be done: In the Falls Road yesterday. Photograph: Pacemaker

Blair and Trimble: the key relationship

David McKittrick on the balancing act necessary to keep Unionists on board



Showing the strain: Tony Blair yesterday. Photograph: AP

A KEY building-block in the negotiations has been the development of a constructive working relationship between Tony Blair and the Ulster Unionist Party leader, David Trimble.

Without a basis of mutual confidence no new arrangement would have been possible since Unionism has traditionally been mistrustful of successive British governments, regarding them as too ready to do deals with Irish nationalism.

This was obvious in 1995 at the news conference when Mr Trimble declared he was standing for the leadership of his party. Asked what changes he would make he replied: "One small change that I would make, but none the less crucial change - I would never go into Downing Street alone. You've got to

have someone else with you to take notes, to observe and to listen carefully. It is absolutely crucial, because one must be careful not to be seduced."

The high degree of suspicion evident in those remarks was in marked contrast to the scene at Hillsborough Castle earlier this week when the cameras caught a shirt-sleeved Tony Blair leading Mr Trimble to his car. While their body language could not be described as relaxed, it did seem to speak of a businesslike relationship, and the fact that no other Unionist was there "to take notes, to observe and to listen carefully" spoke volumes.

Mr Blair privately spelt out

the basis of his approach to Unionism when he spoke to Irish-American figures in Washington in February. A note of the meeting was later leaked. According to this account: "The Prime Minister said that the Unionist community felt isolated in many ways. The Irish government supported the nationalist side, whereas the British government obviously had to take account of both communities. This led the Unionists to tend to resist all change."

The important thing was that the Unionists had signed up to North-South structures. As far as Trimble was concerned he had come a good deal further to tend to resist all change.

It seems clear from this that he assessed the Unionist leader as a potential moderniser, around whom the basis of a new deal could be built.

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Tabloid planning to run Michael photos

By Tim Cornwell
in Los Angeles

SINGER George Michael was in hiding yesterday, out of sight and sound of the tabloid press, but there was no end in sight to the public humiliation of his arrest at a public toilet in a Beverly Hills park.

According to a top Californian news agency, the *News of the World* is planning a photo spread this week which conclusively "outs" Michael. The pictures show him in the company of a close male friend, including some of him sunbathing in the Will Rogers Memorial Park and even about to enter the lavatory, it was reported.

The newspaper acquired the photographs for an estimated \$50,000 (£30,000) last year, according to the news agency, via All Action, a London agency, acting on behalf of two Hollywood paparazzi. But they were held back after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, a close

friend and fan of the singer. Last night, the *Now* refused to confirm or deny that it would be running the pictures.

Michael, 34, was arrested on Tuesday by a undercover officer. He gave his real name, Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou. Officers did not recognise him until they booked him at the station, when he listed his stage name under "other names used" and "singer" as his occupation.

Released three hours later on \$500 bail, apparently before reporters were tipped to the arrest, he made use of the time to pull an effective vanishing act. There was no sign of him at the Beverly Hills address he gave to police.

On some accounts he was sheltering at the home of Hollywood record producer David Geffen. As news of the photographs emerged, Beverly Hills police said the arrest occurred after recent complaints of lewd conduct at the park, and was not aimed at netting Michael.



War game: Curator Ian Smith at a new Cold War museum based at the Hack Green nuclear bunker, Cheshire, which would have been one of 17 centres of government in the event of attack

Photograph: Bruce Adams

Unions are winning the battle for recognition

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

COMPANIES are increasingly willing to recognise unions as ministers press ahead with plans for a law to boost employees' rights, the Trades Union Congress has found.

Workers' leaders report a substantial rise in the number of union recognition agreements over the past six months, covering an extra 70,000 employees.

The figures were published after a two-hour late night meeting on the issue of union rights between ministers and union leaders on Wednesday night. Employees' representatives were left with the impression that the Government would be attempting to steer a middle course between the aspirations of unions and the concerns of employers in framing legislation.

The TUC wants recognition to be granted when backed by more than half of those voting in a ballot. The Confederation of British Industry argues it should be more than half of the total workforce. A mandatory 50 to 60 per cent participation rate in any ballot is likely to form the compromise.

It is understood that while the Department of Trade and Industry has formed its views on the proposed legislation, the White Paper, "Fairness at Work", which will contain the proposals, requires the attention of the Prime Minister who has been preoccupied with the peace talks in Northern Ireland.

The latest TUC "Trade Union Trends" calculates that recognition deals are currently outpacing instances of "de-recognition" by 45 to one.

John Monks, TUC general

secretary, said the data sug-

gested that the "mere presence" of the law would encourage more voluntary agreements and that statutory procedures would only need to be used in a minority of cases.

It is known that companies in a wide range of industries are reassessing their attitude to unions ahead of the publication of the White Paper. Many businesses, however, will wait to see the detail of the plans before committing themselves to a system of collective bargaining.

The CBI contend that few companies were making moves on the issue because legislation was still some time away.

The TUC report said that 40 per cent of unions reported securing new recognition deals within the past six months, compared to only 24 per cent in the previous half year.

The Government was yesterday urged to introduce fresh legislation on behalf of 900,000 temporary workers after a Court of Appeal judgment cast considerable doubt on the rights of employees on fixed term contracts.

The court ruled that although production assistant Kelly Phillips had worked more than the statutory two years for the BBC, she had no right to claim unfair dismissal. Ms Phillips had signed "waiver clauses" in four separate consecutive contracts and therefore did not qualify for protection under the law.

Stephen Cavalier, of solicitors' Thompsons, described the judgment as "stunning" and said it flew in the face of other rulings. He said that Ms Phillips, with the backing of television production union Bectu, would appeal to the House of Lords.

Burglars get life for killing

THREE burglars were yesterday given life sentences for the murder of a keen runner who chased and caught up with them after he returned home from work to find that they had ransacked his house. Christopher Williams, 23, died from a stab wound to his heart when the gang turned on him and attacked him on waste ground in July last year. His pregnant girlfriend and their three-year-old daughter slept upstairs at their home in Nantyffyllon, Mid Glamorgan, unaware of the tragedy.

Yesterday Alan Naylor, 27, Wyndham Richard Thomas, 21, and Christopher Chislett, 18, were each found guilty of the murder and aggravated burglary. Sentencing them at Swansea Crown Court, Mr Justice Maurice Kay said a "decent and brave young man" had been killed.

Cooke stays put

THE Metropolitan police has "no plans" to move child killer Sidney Cooke from his current location. Carlton TV's *London Today* programme had claimed that a cell block at Cheshunt police station in Hertfordshire, which is just within the Met's area, was being refurbished, possibly to hold Cooke.

However, Met sources said that there were no plans to move him from the police station where he is currently being kept until "suitable long-term accommodation" could be found. It is thought that Cooke, 70, who was released from prison custody on Monday after serving nine years of a 16-year term for the manslaughter of teenager Jason Swift, is being held at Leman Street police station in east London.

Seals lose protection

THE Government is to end the all-year-round protection given to common seals living on Shetland. The decision to lift the 25-year-old ban on killing the animals was taken after experts found that the population of common seals on the islands had reached a minimum of 6,000 and was "self-sustaining". As from 29 April, people holding an appropriate firearm licence will be able to shoot seals at any time outside the animal's breeding and pupping season which is from June to August.

PC rescues fisherman

A BEAT bobby plunged into icy waters to rescue a drunken fisherman who had tumbled out of his capsizing boat in a Birmingham reservoir. Constable Mike Tolley, who spent eight years in the Navy, took to the waters carrying a life buoy after an angler raised the alarm at the Lifford Lane Reservoir in Colridge on Wednesday night. The rescued man, aged 21, was yesterday recovering in hospital.

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دكتور عبد الرحمن

No regrets over career scrambled by eggs

EDWINA CURRIE had eggs for breakfast yesterday "as a slightly defiant gesture". She also considered having a glass of champagne, but rejected the idea - presumably because she knew the day would be frantically busy.

Nearly 10 years on, salmonella in eggs was back. Or to be more precise it never went away. *New Scientist* reported this week that one in 650 eggs still contained the disease.

So, while preparing for her late-night Radio Five show and dashling off another chapter of her latest novel, the former junior health minister enjoyed a blast from the past.

The sudden media interest took her back to her two years as a health minister, she said, "except I haven't got a huge press office to back me up". Instead, she navigated her own way through an interview with Radio 4's *Today* programme, Jimmy Young's Radio 2 chat show and a host of calls from the media.

In December 1988, Mrs Currie caused a furore by announcing that "most of the egg production in this country is affected by salmonella". Sales dropped by 10 per cent and many egg producers went out of business. So did Edwina, who was forced to resign. In the wake of the episode, 2 million chickens were

IN THE NEWS

EDWINA CURRIE

slaughtered. So did she regret speaking out all those years ago? After all, she might have made Cabinet status if she had kept her mouth shut, and the effect might have been no different. There were around 32,000 salmonella cases in 1997 compared with 27,000 in 1988, though the figures may not be entirely comparable. Mrs Currie stood by her words, though: "I can look at myself in the mirror most mornings, and I thank God I can. In the end, you have to deal with yourself."

And after all, she did not remain in the shadows for long. Even before she lost her Derbyshire South seat she continued to make headlines. She backed Michael Heseltine against Margaret Thatcher in 1990, turned down John Major's offer of a Home Office job in 1992, wrote a blockbuster novel about Westminster life in 1993 and launched a bid to lower the homosexual age of consent to 16 in 1994.



Edwina Currie: "I have always been grateful for all the opportunities I've had in my life"

Photograph: Bill Rowntree

Some people might have thought they had heard the last of her when she lost her seat in 1997 but they were wrong. Four months later she was back, with a new book, *She's Leaving Home*, and an announcement that she and her husband Ray were to separate after 25 years of marriage.

Now she hosts a Saturday and Sunday night show on Radio Five. *Late Night Cur-*

rie, and is finishing another book, though she coyly refused to give details yesterday.

The BBC insisted she say goodbye to her political career, at least for now. A Europhile, she had entertained thoughts of becoming an MEP. In any case, she said yesterday, her views would have hindered her selection in the anti-European Conservative Party and the prospect of serving about 5 million con-

stituents did not appeal. "I would be sitting in some committee room somewhere listening to some Belgian droung on and thinking I could be doing six hours of broadcasting and getting paid for it, or writing chapter 14. I am grateful that I had 14 years in Parliament and I have always been grateful for all the opportunities I've had in my life," she said.

Fran Abrams

FLIGHT OF FANCY

Edwina Currie first made headlines at the 1986 Tory conference when she brandished a pair of handcuffs at *Victor Waddington*, then Home Secretary. She then acts like her. Lord Gorbachev was reportedly to have experienced "a bit of a shock of desire".

TIMELY TIPS

On how she did could avoid "bafflement and bewilderment". On how best to guard against AIDS when travelling abroad: "Take the wife." On how young women could avoid cervical cancer: "Don't smoke around."

SECOND THOUGHTS

In January, *Bill Rowntree* announced his retirement. She said: "I had the chance, I would say, for all over again... but I now have a very good relationship mostly because I'm getting on, stopped."

Taxi driver awarded £450,000 for assault

By Jason Bennett
Crime Correspondent

A TAXI driver has been awarded nearly £450,000 compensation for assault in the largest ever damages payout against a police force, it emerged yesterday.

A jury awarded George Raedles, 52, the massive amount after hearing that nine years ago he was kneed in the groin by an officer from Merseyside Police, shoulder charged, pushed to the floor and punched in the head.

He was awarded £300,000 exemplary damages, £100,000 aggravated damages, £40,000 for post traumatic stress disorder and £3,500 for his physical injuries - a total of £443,500.

Merseyside Police, however, has been given permission to appeal and is likely to have the sum cut substantially. A Court of Appeal ruling last February reduced the level of "exemplary" damages awarded by juries to a maximum of £50,000 in extreme cases.

The claim followed an incident in the Halewood area of Merseyside on Easter Sunday 1989, when Mr Raedles, from Stockbridge Village, Merseyside, says he was stopped in his taxi by officers.

A dispute followed and the Mr Raedles said he was assaulted.

"He was punching me in the face and I was swallowing blood and losing consciousness. Just then I heard a voice saying 'that's enough' and I felt the weight come off my chest," he said.

He said another officer had arrived on the scene and inter-

vened. He suffered seventeen separate injuries including two black eyes, a loose tooth, bruising to his shoulder, chest, face and scratches to his neck.

Following the incident, Mr Raedles was convicted at a magistrates' court of threatening behaviour but cleared of assault. He then sued Merseyside Police.

After the hearing, which was held at Liverpool Crown Court, Mr Raedles said: "I am here for justice. I did not want a shilling. I was fit and strong, a weaker man may well have died." The case finished on Wednesday, but the full details only emerged yesterday.

He said that since the incident his physical and mental condition have deteriorated so much that he has had to give up work. His solicitor Julian Linskell added: "Mr Raedles is absolutely thrilled to bits with the decision."

Sir James Sharples, the Chief Constable of Merseyside, was less delighted. A spokesman said: "The Chief Constable is very disappointed at this decision of the jury and the award of damages."

"These awards seem to be out of all proportion to the incident and apparently out of step with awards and appeals in similar cases."

One of the highest previous awards - £220,000 to London hairdresser Kenneth Hsu for wrongful arrest, assault and imprisonment by police - was slashed to £35,000 last year after Scotland Yard won a landmark case to curb civil damages payouts to victims of unlawful arrest and assault by the police.

Murdered girl's mother to sue

THE MOTHER of schoolgirl Caroline Dickinson, murdered on a school trip to France nearly two years ago, yesterday launched a civil claim for damages against the education authority which organised the activity holiday.

Sue Dickinson, 40, from Launceston, started civil proceedings against Cornwall County Council for alleged negligence and breach of duty in the circumstances in which Caroline died.

Caroline, 13, was raped and murdered in a youth hostel in Pléne Fougeres, Brittany, on 18 July 1996. She was on a five-day trip with 39 other youngsters and five adults from Launceston Community College. Her killer has not been caught.

Mrs Dickinson has never spoken publicly about her daughter's death, but has sup-

ported the continuing efforts of Caroline's father, her former husband John Dickinson, to press the French police for a more effective investigation.

Her solicitor, Ian Langford, read a statement which said Mrs Dickinson wanted to make it clear that her decision to proceed with court action was not motivated by personal gain. "If she is successful she intends to place any compensation in a trust fund for her daughter, Jenny," said Mr Langford.

Mr Langford said if Mrs Dickinson's case was successful, the likely award would not be more than £15,000.

Cornwall County Council said it had been advised by its insurers that it had no liability for the murder. The authority said it regretted the fact that Mrs Dickinson felt it necessary to issue proceedings.

VAUXHALL RECOGNISES VECTRA DRIVERS.



New car registration figures for the first quarter of 1998 show that the Vauxhall Vectra is now the best selling car in its class in the United Kingdom.

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We were therefore disappointed to see that a survey conducted amongst viewers of BBC Top Gear programme by J.D. Power and broadcast on 9th April shows early produced Vectras in a bad light. The survey was based on questionnaires returned by 445 drivers of N-registered Vectras, out of the total 53,000 Vectras sold that registration year.

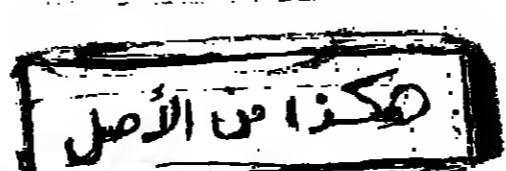
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Chairman & Managing Director

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Rounded up: The Damien Hirst 'Spin' painting which will be sold by its owner, who won it in a competition. Photograph: Philip Meech

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Hirst's spinning wheel brings good fortune

By Clare Garner

DAMIEN HIRST has helped many of his contemporaries make their reputations and now, quite by accident, he is doing it again - this time for a rank outsider.

The winner of one of Hirst's "Spin" paintings, which the artist donated to the *Big Issue* as a prize for a competition last autumn, turns out to be an aspiring artist, Chris Callaghan, is employed as a support worker for people with learning difficulties, but enjoys painting portraits and murals on the side.

Mr Callaghan, in his late twenties, is selling the work in a sale of contemporary art at Christie's on 22 April. The painting is expected to fetch between £22,000 and £28,000, and Mr Callaghan plans to live on the proceeds so that he can establish himself as a full-time artist.

Mr Callaghan, whose name has already been immortalised in the painting's title, *Beautiful Big Issue: What's got a Bottom on the Top* (Chris Callaghan Swirly Pink Painting (With Smoked Fag)), will be sorry to part with the work, which for the past six months has been hanging in his mother's house because his one-room flat was too small.

"It's been nice to have owned a Damien Hirst," he said. "But I also can't deny that I could well use whatever money I get for it. I would like to use the money to support myself, while I concentrate on doing more of my painting."

Mr Callaghan, who lives in Liverpool, rarely enters competitions, but was lured by the prospect of joining the ranks of Charles Saatchi and owning a

first pasted part of the *Big Issue* logo and a smoked cigarette onto Mr Callaghan's prize.

Baby milk rules 'being flouted'

By Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

"COMPELLING" evidence that the international code on baby milk is being widely violated is revealed this week in the *British Medical Journal*.

More than 3,000 women were interviewed in Bangladesh, Poland, South Africa and Thailand to see whether the international code of marketing substitutes for breast milk was being adhered to.

The World Health Organisation estimates that 1.5 deaths a year could be prevented by effective breast feeding protection. Failure to breast feed increases the risk of childhood diseases, impairs child development and may increase the risk of adult disease.

In some cases, as many as 50 percent of health facilities had received free samples which were not being used for research or professional evaluation and as many as one in five health workers had received free gifts from the companies involved in manufacturing or distributing

the breast milk substitutes. Bangladesh was the only country studied which had laws governing the marketing of breast milk substitutes and had the smallest number of free samples - one out of 385 mothers said they had received free samples compared with 97 out of 370 mothers in Bangkok. In Warsaw, 56 per cent of facilities surveyed were found to have information given to health workers in contravention of the code.

The *BMJ* said the frequency of the violations shows that 16 years after the code was adopted "its requirements are still unmet", and "there is little to suggest that the situation would be different in many other countries".

The *BMJ* called for governments to incorporate the code into legislation and that monitoring for overt violations should be more systematic. There should also be more emphasis on a positive attitude to breast feeding, to counter "company propaganda...a challenge largely unfulfilled by health workers and professional bodies".

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Rush to flee threat of a white Easter

By Linus Gregoridis
and Alistair Clair

RECORD numbers of holidaymakers are leaving Britain today because of the soaring value of the pound and the threat of a white Easter.

Airports and motoring organisations have been bracing themselves for the rush as an estimated 1.5 million Britons escape a cold, wet and windy start to the long weekend. Torrential rainfall caused flash flooding in parts of Britain yesterday as holidaymakers attempted an early exit for the four-day break.

A spokesman for AA Roadwatch said: "The most badly affected areas have been in the Midlands. Extreme flooding in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire has led to many roads being closed. The fact that people were leaving to go on holiday has made matters even worse."

Wales was also badly affected by

the flooding, with the Environment Agency issuing warnings there. Weather experts say the torrential rain and plunging temperatures are set to continue throughout the holiday.

A spokeswoman for the Association of British Travel Agents (Abta) said yesterday: "An unprecedented number of people are going abroad this Easter, and it's largely due to the pound being so strong, especially against the European currencies. The Canary Islands, mainland Spain and the Balearics are the most popular destination for people going abroad. The favourable exchange rate makes self-catering very popular."

At least half a million people are expected to use Channel tunnel services and ferries, while more than 800,000 people will fly.

A spokesman for Heathrow Airport said: "Easter is one of the busiest times of the year. We are expecting more than half a million passengers through the airport this weekend."

Greece is set to enjoy a tourist boom because of the recent devaluation of the drachma, according to Abta. But holidaymakers heading for Athens could face disruption because of public strikes this week in sympathy with Olympic Airways workers, who are unhappy with plans to restructure the state airline.

The AA has warned motorists to take extra care because of dangerous driving conditions. Motorists on the M25 were confronted with the bizarre sight of a yacht lying on the carriageway yesterday, after high winds had overturned it from its trailer.

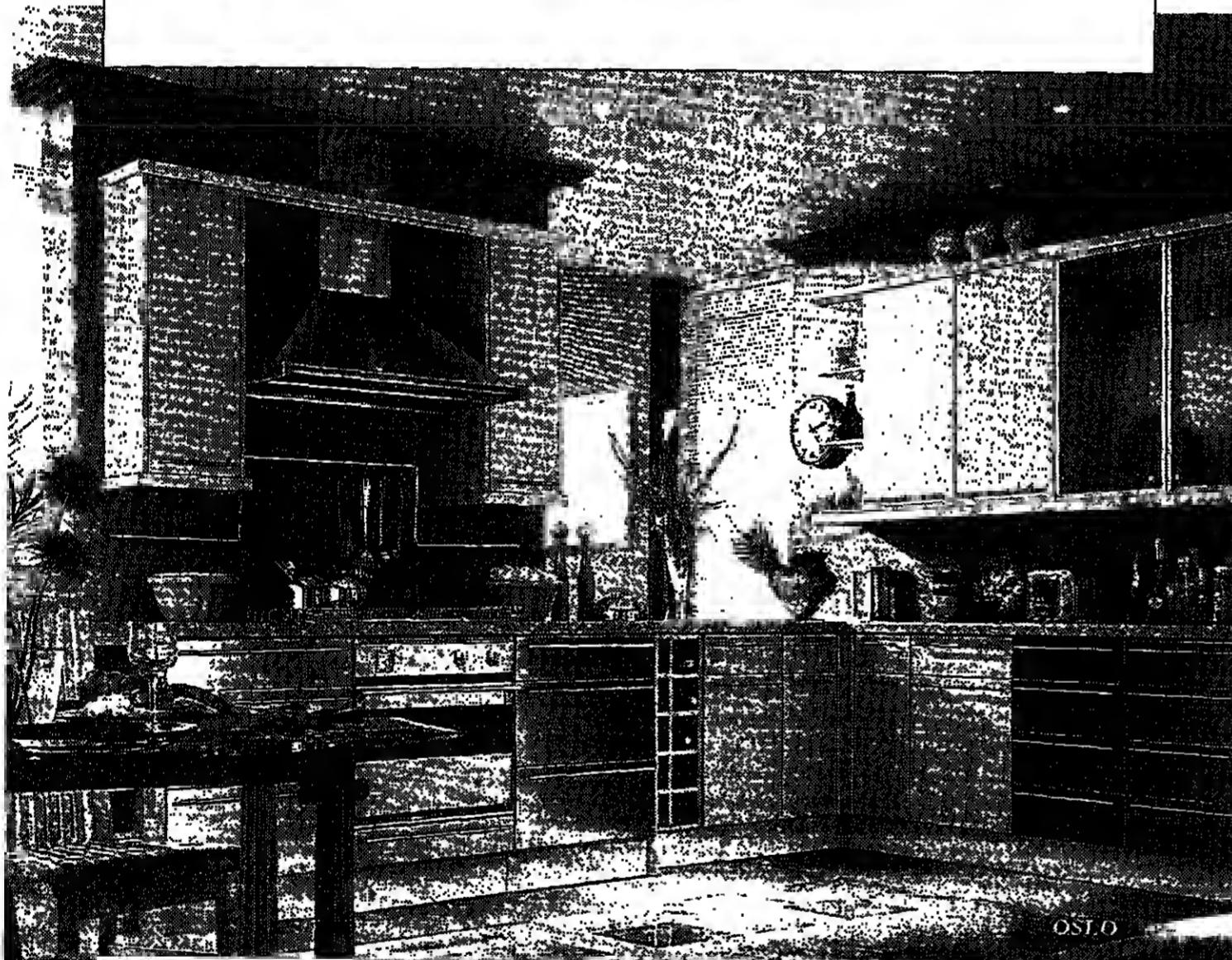
Weather experts say there is a chance of a white Easter in Britain, although the possibility of snow is confined mainly to high ground.

William Hill, the bookmaker, has cut its odds on a white Easter from 33-1 to 6-1, following forecasts that the weekend will bring temperatures below freezing.



Rank outsider: Fiona Stewart, 23, yesterday becoming the first woman to carry the sword of honour as Sandhurst's top cadet at the Sovereign's Parade. She beat 183 others to the award and will join the Royal Signals. Photograph: Tom Pilston

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Teachers and lecturers' conference: Call for regulation of Web companies

Paedophiles targeting pupils via the Internet

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

PAEDOPHILES are trying to trap children through school e-mail addresses, teachers warned yesterday.

Ministers want every child to have their own e-mail address and access to the Internet. But yesterday teachers called for more protection against children down-loading pornography, and appealed for tough regulation of Web companies.

Michael Moore, head of information technology at Little Hulton community school in Manchester, said sixth-formers at one school in the North-west had been targeted by paedophiles soon after the introduction of e-mail.

He said: "A paedophile ring

in Sheffield discovered the system and invited students to take part. They suggested friendships with other males. When schools get involved in the Internet they seek publicity because it's good for the school and people with the wrong intentions certainly can easily identify students at the school and use e-mail."

"The students reported it very quickly and the school reported it to the police.

"It's easy to send e-mail to a block of people, and it's very low cost. Unless the teachers themselves read every entry it's very difficult to monitor it."

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers' meeting in Bournemouth called for schools to be given electronic guards against unsuitable material, to protect teachers from

legal and other challenges from parents.

They said obscene or racist material was available on the Internet even if computers were screened using so-called "firewall" software. Teachers fear they could be held liable if schoolchildren download illegal obscene material.

Mr Moore said in another case a music teacher had found pornographic pictures after searching the World Wide Web for the score of the *The Sound of Music*. He said: "When they are on the Internet, students will try looking for this material and they will want to amaze their friends."

Brian Waggett, a teacher at Range High School in Farnby, Merseyside, said: "Pupils will be attempting to access the Net and they will find dubious material. They will find it and you must be on your guard. Nobody can police the Internet completely, it's a monster."

Terri Gallagher, a teacher at Top Valley School, Nottinghamshire, said: "Children are naturally inquisitive ... 27 per cent of families have Net access. When they are not on a school provider, these young people will be able to access all these sites and I feel our Net education at school should acknowledge they exist."

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said British Internet providers were trying to police their services, but unregulated foreign sites were easily accessed. "Guidance has already been given to teachers. But it's extremely difficult."

We'll cut school red tape, says minister

By Ben Russell

STEPHEN BYERS, the schools minister, moved to head off a summer of strife in schools yesterday by promising swift action to cut teachers' workloads.

Mr Byers made an unscheduled visit to the Association of Teachers and Lecturers' conference in Bournemouth for talks to avert industrial action over school bureaucracy.

He intervened on the eve of the largest teaching conference to reassure teachers that Government plans would make action unnecessary.

He said: "When the unions are fully aware of how the gov-

ernment intends to implement the recommendations of the bureaucracy working group there will be no reason for them to take industrial action."

Both the National Union of Teachers, whose conference starts today and the NASUWT union has voted to boycott excessive meetings and other bureaucracy from the start of the summer term. The moderate ATL is backing industrial action over workload as a last resort.

Mr Byers said: "We want teachers to concentrate on raising standards and providing high-quality education. We do not want them to be diverted into becoming paper-pushers."

Mr Byers said specific measures would be outlined over the next few days and warned that disruption to government policies would not be tolerated.

Earlier, Peter Smith, ATL general-secretary, told the conference that efforts to cut paperwork were taking too long to filter down to the classroom.

A survey of 4,000 youngsters found 62 per cent thought teaching was too stressful to consider as a career. Mr Smith said: "Isn't it interesting when the pupils in the class now understand the stress of teaching them. It's not only no good for teachers, it's no good for pupils either."

Puttnam fears for arts

LORD PUTTNAM yesterday attacked a key plank of the Government's drive to raise school standards, claiming too much emphasis on the three Rs could squeeze creativity out of the classroom, writes Ben Russell.

The Oscar-winning film producer, a key member of the School Standards Taskforce, warned that a "painting-by-numbers" approach to teaching would deprive children of a well-rounded schooling. He said: "I believe we face a real danger at the moment, the danger of al-

towing arts education to be marginalised – unnecessarily sacrificed at the alter of the numeracy and literacy targets."

He told the conference that it would be wrong to cut the school curriculum down to a bare minimum of subjects and deprive children of the arts.

He said: "They can no longer be viewed as a lightweight diversion from the more taxing serious subjects of maths and science. I believe that a child who is not exposed to the riches of the arts is like a

flower without sunshine." It was also important "to ensure that every child leaves school with a rock solid foundation in the basic skills".

PRODUCT RECALL

TESCO "TRANQUILLITY" FRAGRANCED GEL CANDLE
TESCO "VITALITY" FRAGRANCED GEL CANDLE

Tesco has identified a problem with the above two products, which were on sale in Tesco stores

from October 1997 to January 1998. A small number may flare under certain circumstances.

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TESCO

How FBI agent sent his son to Death Row

By David Usborne

in New York

THEY DO not come much more dedicated than John Cook. Dedicated as a lawman – in his home city of Macon, Georgia, he was an FBI agent for 29 years – as a Christian and as a father. Never could he have imagined how those three decent loyalties would one day rip him, his life and his family apart.

For almost three decades, Mr Cook, 55, would have these words for his children as he left home each morning: "I'm going out to make the streets of America safe for little children, pretty women and old dogs". Glib words for sure, said with tongue half in cheek, but words he earnestly believed in.

One time, Mr Cook and his colleagues failed the city. That was the night of 2 January 1995, when two university students were shot dead as they sat in their car in a lovers' lane area at nearby Lake Juliette. It was only on 4 December 1996, that the Macon police, through gun-sale records, found a suspect. He lived in a trailer near the lake. Name: Andrew Cook.

Andrew was John Cook's son, now 23, and that was the beginning of the agent's nightmare. That day, he received a phone call from Andrew. This is how Mr Cook later recalled asking his son about the night of the murders.

"He was hesitant, and finally said, 'Daddy, I can't tell you. You're one of them, a cop', I said. 'Andy, I'm your father. Do you know anything?'" As the conversation proceeded, the boy said that yes, he did. Next,

Andrew admitted he had been at the scene. Then, girding himself, John Cook asked the fateful question: "Did you shoot them?" Andrew said that he had.

It was a moment. Mr Cook recalled, that "wrenched my heart out. I felt like the world crashed in on me". But what was to ensue would prove more painful still. Unable to put aside his commitment to the law and to God, even for his own child, he accompanied the boy the next day to turn himself in.

Two weeks ago, Andrew

'I was looking for evil out the front door and it came in the back and caught my son'

Cook went on trial for two counts of first degree murder. Because of that one conversation – the telephone confession – John Cook found himself in court as the star witness for the prosecution.

The trial, in Macon's courthouse, lasted barely a week.

With the words of the father in its ears as well as DNA evidence produced by the prosecution, the jury took two hours to reach its verdict: guilty. Judge Johnnie Caldwell said that the killing of the two young people, Michelle Cartagena, 19, and Grant Hendrickson, 20, was the most senseless he had ever seen.

One more task remained for

the distraught father: to plead with the jury in the sentencing hearing the next day not to spare his son from execution. Moving the court to tears and crying himself, he said: "I was busy looking out the front door for evil. But it came in the back door and consumed my son."

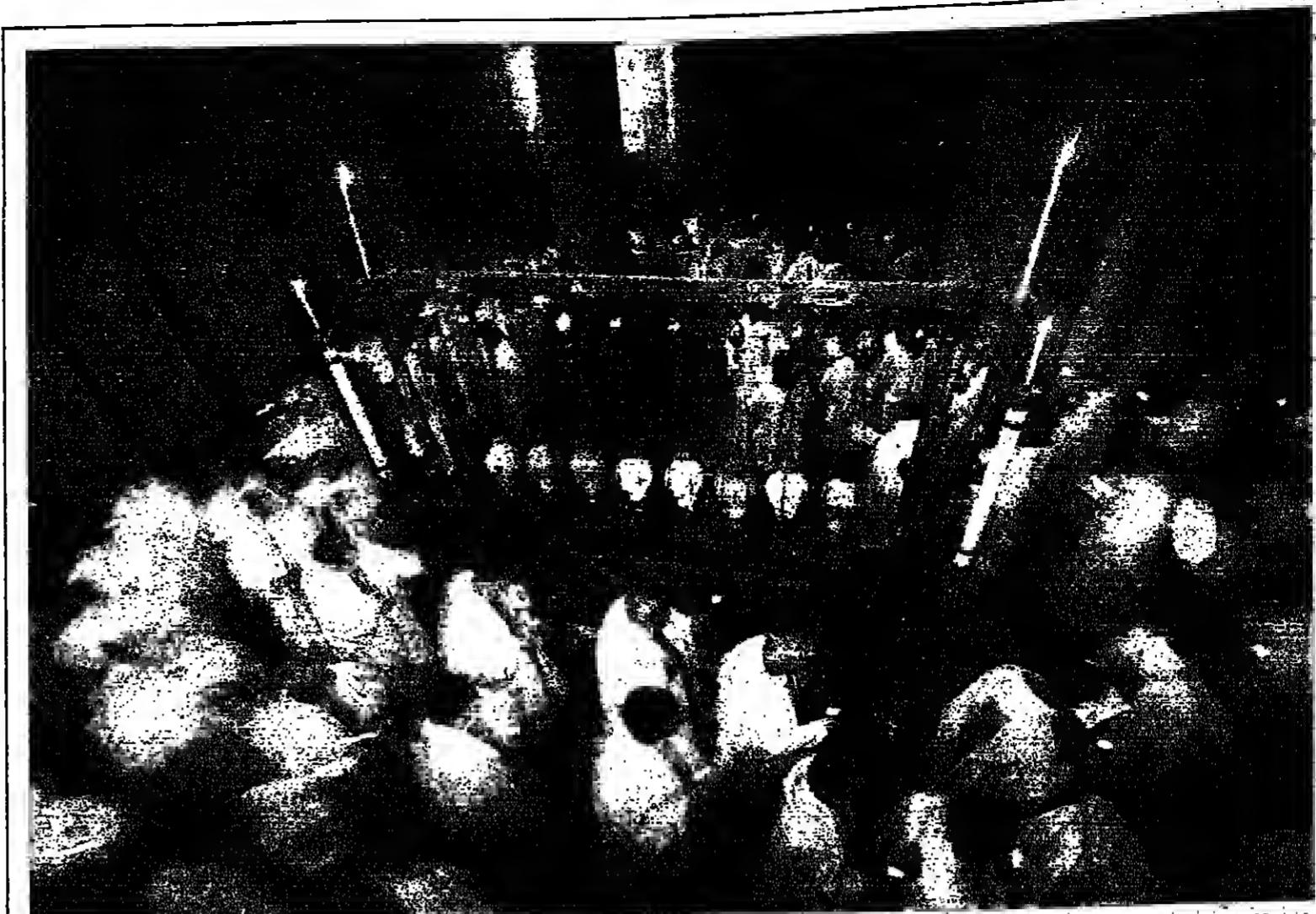
He went on: "Yesterday, I sat here and talked to you as the cop, and now I want to talk to you as the father." Asking jurors to accept that there had to be a "kernel of value, of goodness" deep in his son, he concluded: "I knew it would probably be my words that would send him to the electric chair."

He had guessed right. Andrew Cook's confession, given in trust from a son to a father, was too much for the jury to ignore: it showed no hesitation in recommending the death sentence. Judge Caldwell duly obliged and Andrew Cook is now on Georgia's Death Row.

Cook Sr, who resigned from the FBI in February and is now an investigator in the local district attorney's office, has since told the *Atlanta Constitution* that he survived the trial "not because I am any hero or have special courage. You do what you have to, and I have a strong belief in God."

"God is not finished with the final chapter in any of our lives. I don't know what the final chapter will be for Andy's life, but somehow, somewhere, there will be a purpose."

Does he regret reporting that December telephone call to the police? No. But, he adds, "I probably would not have gone into such detail that I would be the star witness against him."



Sacred path: Priests from the Latin Church take part in a procession yesterday after the traditional washing of the feet ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City in preparation for the Easter holiday

Photograph: AP

Karadzic 'preparing to surrender'

By Rupert Cornwell

IT appeared yesterday that the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, was preparing to surrender to the United Nations court in The Hague to face war crimes charges. He is believed to have fled his stronghold in Pale but his whereabouts could not be confirmed. Mr Karadzic faces two counts of genocide for his part in the massacres of Muslims during the 1992/95 Bosnian war.

A Western diplomatic source said that a negotiating process had been going on for some time and Karadzic could be giving himself up to the war crimes tribunal in The Hague in "days or weeks".

"Karadzic has been in touch indicating that he is thinking seriously of giving himself up and there have even been a couple of incidents recently where that was expected but he apparently got cold feet ... He has sent signals that he wants certain conditions," the source said.

Asked if Karadzic had been in indirect contact with the tribunal, which has indicted him on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, the source said there was "a good chance of that since he apparently realises his only hope of obtaining special conditions is to surrender".

A Foreign Office spokesman confirmed that Nato's most wanted man appeared to have left Pale, 10 miles outside Sarajevo, along with his private

security force of some 400 men. "All I can say is that we haven't forgotten the indictments, that his place is in The Hague, and with that size of guard, it shouldn't be hard to track him down," the spokesman said.

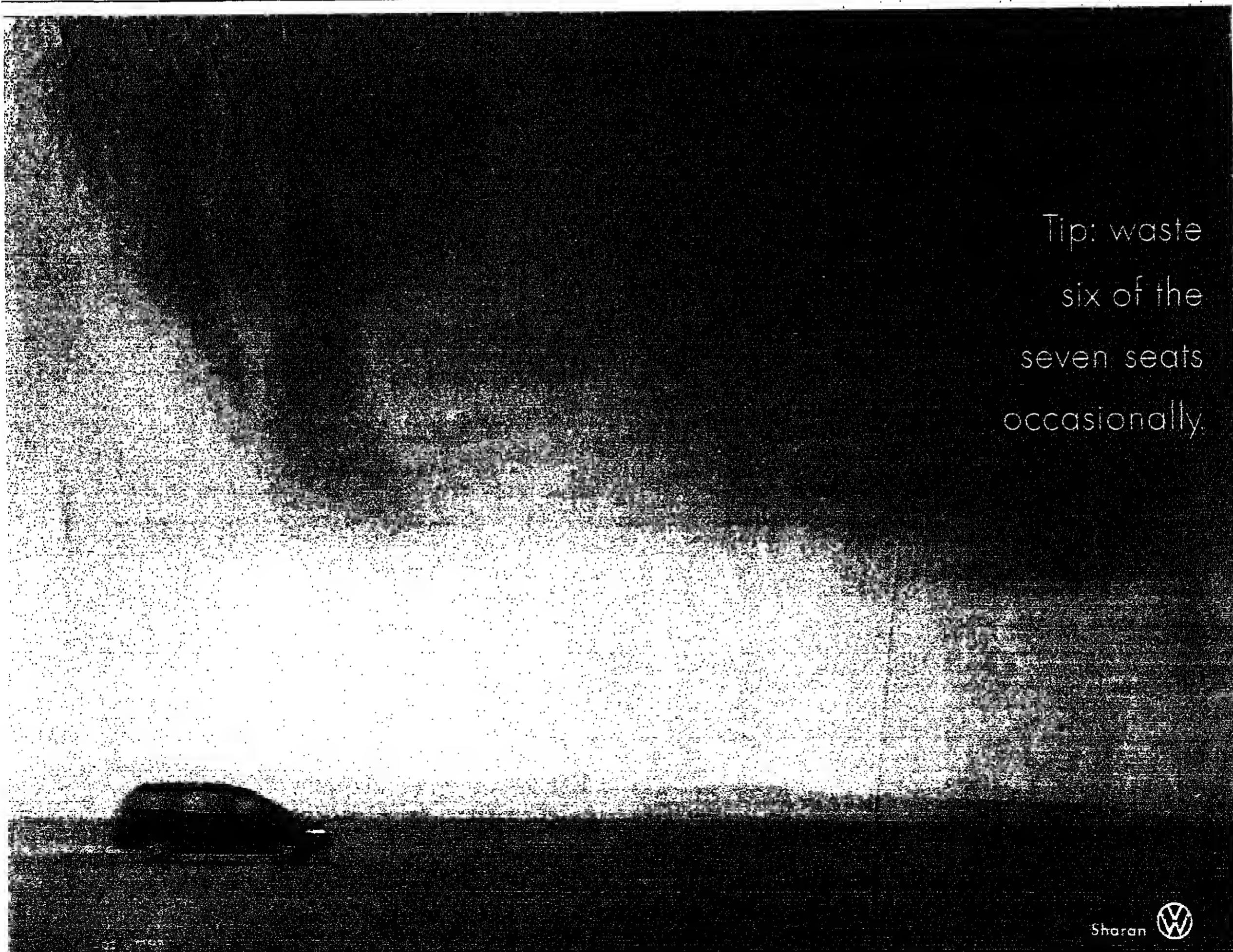
French intelligence sources told *Le Monde* that Mr Karadzic had fled Bosnia last November and was hiding in an eastern European country, probably Belarus. He had hired two American lawyers who were discussing the terms under which he might surrender.

The net has been closing ever tighter around Mr Karadzic in recent days, starting with last week's unannounced and deliberately intimidatory visit to his headquarters by hundreds of Nato troops, backed by tanks and armoured personnel carriers. Then on Wednesday came the arrest of two indicted Bosnian Serbs suspects in a part of Bosnia patrolled by British troops.

Of the 74 people publicly indicted with Bosnian war crimes, 25 are now in custody in The Hague. But the key targets are Mr Karadzic and his military commander Ratko Mladic, who also faces two genocide counts. Mladic is believed to be still in Bosnia, at a heavily protected military base.

"Karadzic's days at large are becoming shorter and shorter," Carlos Westendorp, the top Western envoy to Bosnia, declared this week. "He may be in Russia or Serbia. But the only safe country for him right now is North Korea."

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Australians face poll tainted by race row

By Robert Milliken
in Sydney

AUSTRALIA faces the grim prospect of a general election based on race after the federal government yesterday rejected parliament's changes to its controversial legislation that limits Aborigines' rights to claim title to their native lands.

After months of bitter negotiations with Aborigines and parliamentary horse-trading, John Howard, the Prime Minister, yesterday declared "unacceptable" amendments to the legislation on which he has staked his political reputation, and which he now seems likely to use as a trigger to dissolve both houses of parliament and call a general election. "If the issue is to be resolved, it may be necessary to have a double dissolution," he said.

Aboriginal leaders denounced the government, branded its legislation as racist and walked out of talks in Canberra, the capital, on Thursday night. Gladys Tybingoompa, an elder of the Wik people of north Queensland, said: "Today, to the whole of the world, especially to the nation of Australia, I say this to you: it's come to a disgrace. This is called the walkaway, the last time the message is given to you, to the Australians. Clap your hands together like the sea of hands to give support to us all." Australia's leading Aboriginal official, Gatil Djerrkura, head of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' Commission, said: "It seems we can have no faith in the government to protect our existing rights."

The racial clash has come about over the Howard government's native title legislation known as the Wik bill. It was introduced to parliament last year after the High Court ruled, in a case that the Wik people brought before it, that Aborigines could claim native title over



John Howard: Playing the race card again

pastoral leases. Such leases were first granted in colonial times, to allow farming in regions of outback Australia the size of small European countries. Until the High Court's Wik judgment in 1996, farmers had had exclusive access to such lands, where tribal Aborigines had been pushed off generations ago.

Most farmers claimed that the court ruling would ruin their livelihoods, and called on Mr Howard's conservative government to extinguish native title rights altogether. The government responded with legislation that restricted native title claims. Its Bill was passed in the House of Representatives, the lower house, last year, but was amended in the Senate, the upper house, where the coalition does not have a majority. Mr Howard re-submitted the Bill to the Senate, which refused to back down on three of its key amendments on Wednesday night.

These amendments allowed Aborigines' the right to negotiate with mining companies on pastoral leases (which the original bill disallowed); struck out a "sunset clause" that disallowed any native title claims after six years; and made the Bill subject to Australia's Racial Discrimination Act, not exempt as

the government wanted. Although the Senate had compromised on seven other points, Mr Howard yesterday pronounced its three amendments unacceptable and returned the Bill to the lower house, where it is now "laid aside".

Mr Howard has until October to call an election, which he is determined to do in the hope of getting the Bill passed by a joint sitting of both houses of a new parliament. But, despite the Prime Minister's claim that such an election would not be race-based, his government's insensitive treatment of Aborigines over this and other issues would inevitably feature prominently and cause Australia irreparable international damage.

Mr Howard joined political battle on another front on Wednesday when Patrick Steve-

dore, Australia's second-largest stevedore company, sacked its entire staff of 1,600 dock workers and replaced them with contract non-union labour. The dramatic sackings were the climax of a waterfront dispute that has been simmering for months, in which Mr Howard's government is supporting the employers' moves to break the power of the dock workers' union.

The Prime Minister described the sackings as "a defining moment in Australia's industrial relations history". Like his refusal to back down over the native title Bill, he sees the waterside confrontation as an issue that could give his government a tough image as it moves towards an election. But both flashpoints are huge political gambles.



Wing and a prayer: A Cessna 150 plane hangs upside down with the pilot still inside after it flew into power lines when trying to land at Boeing Field airport in Seattle yesterday. The pilot, who was not injured, was later rescued by firemen using a crane

Photograph: AP



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The Vatican would rather forget Ludmilla Javarova. In the dark days of communism, she was ordained secretly. Peter Stanford meets an exceptional woman

The priest Rome can't embrace

ON EASTER SUNDAY, Rome will be awash with priests from every corner of the globe, gathered in all their finery to celebrate the most important day in the Christian calendar with Pope John Paul II. At the same time, in a tiny flat in a soulless block in Brno in the Czech Republic, a single priest in everyday clothes will celebrate a solitary liturgy behind closed doors. At St Peter's, it will be an all-male occasion. In Brno, the celebrant will be female, 68-year-old Ludmilla Javarova, the Catholic Church's first woman priest in modern times.

Her case has caused consternation in the Vatican. For this is a woman who was ordained by a bishop in good standing with Rome and who cannot therefore be lightly dismissed. Moreover, in taking holy orders at a time when Czechoslovakia's communist rulers were intent on suppressing the church, she risked her life for the institution that now wants to disown her. Priests were routinely imprisoned, tortured and even killed behind the Iron Curtain.

Javarova and her bishop, the charismatic Felix Davidek, believed that the communists' long-term goal was to destroy the church. To guarantee the survival of the priesthood in the face of such an onslaught, married men and women were ordained. A total of six women were said to be involved, but Javarova is the only one to have spoken to anyone about it.

Rome refuses to give any credence to her claims. What

ever Davidek's reasons, the authorities say, he simply did not have the authority to break a centuries-old rule. Perhaps what disturbs Rome most about Javarova's one-woman crusade is its uncanny parallels to that of Florence Tim Oi Li. Ordained Anglican's first woman priest in war-torn Hong Kong in 1944, by a bishop unable to communicate with the outside world and fearful for the fate of the church, once peace had broken out she became the icon around whom campaigners rallied for their long-running – and ultimately successful – battle for women priests.

Brno is in the industrial heartland of the Czech Republic. My interpreter finally managed to locate Block 23 among the concrete complexes. Ludmilla Javarova peered out nervously; her thin, pinched face, with hair pulled back severely into an insubstantial bun, is reminiscent of one of the more tragic figures in Maggie Smith's repertoire.

She finally let us into her two-roomed flat. We couldn't stay long, she said, looking nervously away as if she was hiding someone in the next room. Publicity is the last thing she wants, she explained. "It will damage the church, me and the memory of Bishop Davidek."

I couldn't help but wonder why then she had agreed to my request for an interview. Dressed in a yellow sleeveless blouse and a thick, straight brown-purple skirt, she wore a simple religious medal around her neck. The logic was compelling. The com-

munist may have despised the Catholic Church, but they took it at face value when it said ordination was only for celibate males. For Davidek, tradition could be sacrificed for survival.

"We learned to trust no one. If they betrayed us, we faced prison death. We led double lives. In the day I would teach and then at night we would have our meetings. I

would have to stay up all night to prepare my school work for the next day, in case anyone was suspicious. No one knew details about the other priests, except Bishop Davidek."

Javarova's primary role was to visit women prisoners – including nuns. The authorities denied prisoners access to priests and hence the sacraments, but because she was a

woman, they did not suspect and let her come and go freely. So successful was her disguise, that she began to act as go-between with the underground priests and Davidek. If the bishop held all the information about his network of priests in his head, she knew almost as much. She had the power of life or death over many.

Since Davidek's death in 1988, Javarova has understandably experienced a terrible sense of loss – of his guidance, his willingness to go it alone, his ability to perhaps explain the situation to Rome and make it acceptable.

Does she still consider that she is a priest? "The Vatican says I am not. But what does she think? "The Vatican says I am not, that the times were ex-

Ludmilla Javarova: "It was an extraordinary time. For us it was a question of survival. We feared the church would not survive



How dolphins break the silence

Phil Davison
reports from Key Biscayne on the marine park where disabled children learn to talk



Making waves: Joseph Stevenson at the Therapy Centre

IN HIS home in Feltham, Middlesex, eight-year-old Joseph Stevenson cannot watch TV like other children. It is too noisy for his ultra-sensitive ears, the abrupt change of images too confusing. His parents, Jim and Sheila, have built an extension to their home to allow them to watch TV, and they avoid using a normal refrigerator or electric kettle because of the noise.

Joseph is autistic, with a short attention span and a vocabulary of only 30 words spoken one at a time and rarely. Until two years ago, at the age of six, he had never uttered a word. Then, after swimming with dolphins in Florida, he surprised his parents by blurting out the word "In!" He wanted to get back in the water.

This week, Joseph was back in Florida with his parents, who hoped further "dolphin therapy" might not only add to his vocabulary but also increase his attention span, so that they can better communicate with him.

In a royal blue wetsuit and tightly strapped into a lifebelt, Joseph looked a little uncomfortable as a baby dolphin called Ripley pushed him and Florida occupational therapist Natalie Bravo across the placid surface of a turquoise lagoon where the old TV series *Flipper* was first filmed.

Joseph kicked out and slapped the water but his mum assured me he was having a good time and that was just his way of interacting with Ripley. "He does that with dogs when he likes them," she said. "Autistic children rely on routine. Today, strangers are telling him

what to do. In a couple of days, it will be part of his routine."

The Dolphin Human Therapy Centre here, behind the popular Seaquarium in a natural but filtered lagoon with a sand and rock bottom, treats children for associated neurological problems, mainly cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome and autism, by letting them interact with friendly, intelligent dolphins.

Its founder, 53-year-old Glasgow-born neuropsychologist Dr Dave Nathanson,

is proud of its successes but

warns that the Centre cannot

prevent brain damage or perform miracles. Some of its past clients disagree.

"It is a miracle ... a dream come true ... a fairytale come true ... like seeing magic happen before your eyes," Tabitha Brice, of Weston-Super-Mare, said last month after her eight-year-old son, Nikki, pointed at the pool-sized lagoon and uttered his first ever word – the same as Joseph's – "In".

Nikki had always had the physical ability to speak, but had

been starved of oxygen at birth

and his vocal chords had never

responded to the messages from his brain.

Not everyone agrees with Mrs Brice. "It sounds pretty

hokey to me," says Dr Bernard Rimland of the Autism Research Institute in San Diego, California. "There is no scientific evidence at all that using dolphins is helpful. The reputable people in the field simply feel that the kids like the dolphins and it's a recreational thing."

Putting hope before such

criticism, families pay \$6,200

for the recommended two-

week therapy course – nine

weekday sessions of 40 minutes

each. At present exchange

rates, that's around £3,750, and

does not include accommoda-

tion, air fares or any other

costs. "I'm putting it all on credit cards," said Pauline Pearce, from Watford, whose eight-year-old son, Miles, who has Asperger Syndrome, a form of autism, was also doing therapy this week.

"He's very logical," said Mrs

Pearce. "The social part is dif-

ficult. If Miles were in a native

environment, like in the jungle,

he'd probably be revered as the

local witch doctor. But in a so-

cial environment, he's a misfit.

He already speaks quite well, so

I'm not expecting any dramat-

ic change here."

One of Dr Nathanson's

problems is the cost of dolphins,

currently around \$100,000.

There are three things that

increase a child's attention

span – animals, music and wa-

ter. We have two out of the

three here."

Who needs Barry?



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CRYPTIC CLUES

By Mass

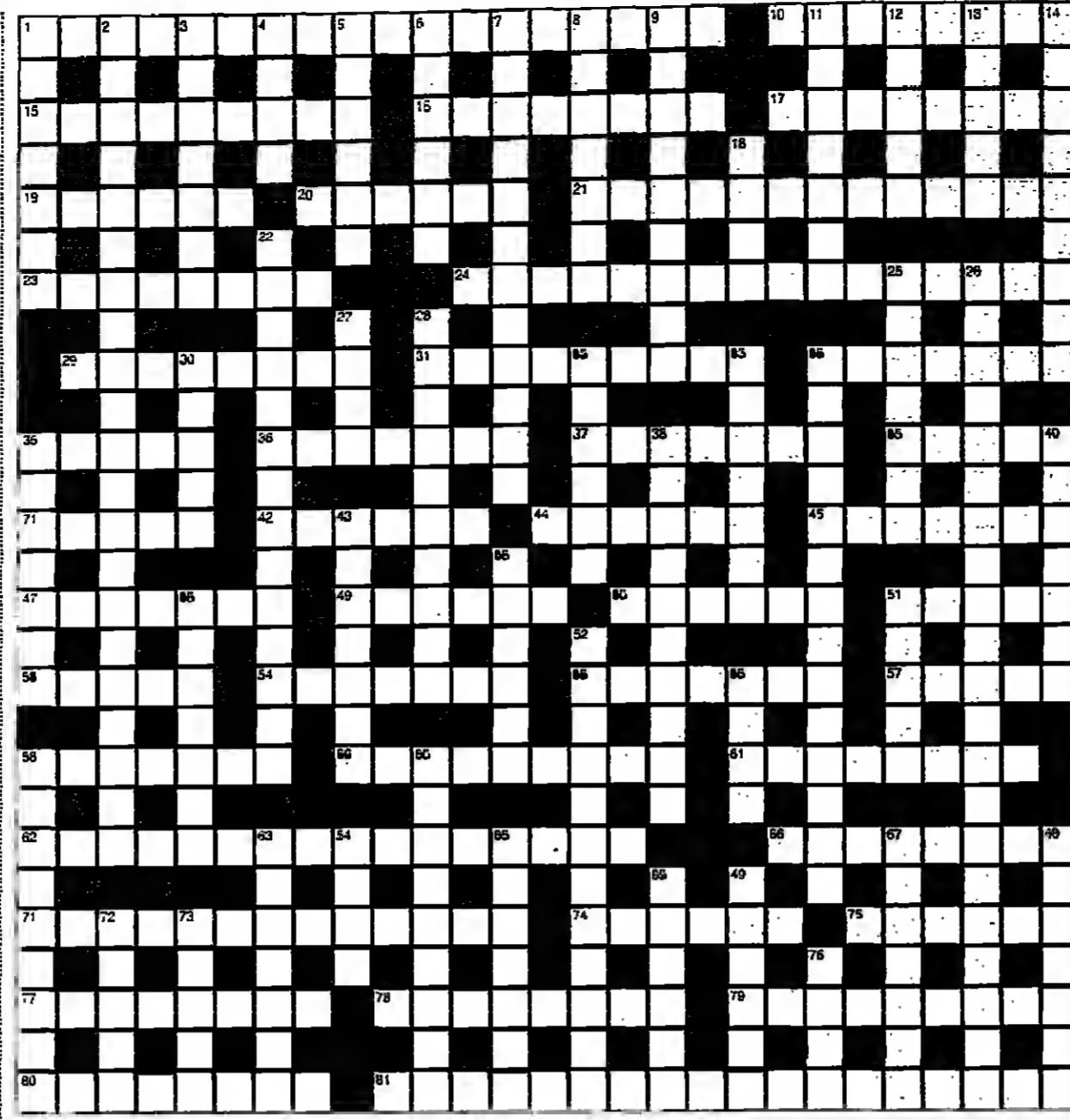
CONCISE CLUES

ACROSS

- Learn from experience? (4,8,11)
- Hot up in California during most of Easter, maybe (8)
- Showing huck, hurgeon in season (9)
- Soldiers on square, wearing new stripes (8)
- Cash used in high deposit (8)
- Repaired shoe, as listed (6)
- Disparages theologian, verbally (6)
- A member of RSPCA? (7,6)
- Colourful application showing taste - including PS, note (8)
- A hillside address (6,2,3,5)
- Stake with bound animal (8)
- How impertinent for a lawyer! (7)
- Openings, initial sign of green environs (7)
- Pike (English) caught in Spring, on river (5)
- Hitches back into East side of Dublin from town in Antrim (7)
- Rider in Spring picking first of daffodils, I see (7)
- Oak's earliest green is manifest (5)
- Right amount of publicity (5)
- Articles with cracks (6)
- Fast before end of Lent, accordingly going without (6)
- Sheep driven to American city of old (7)
- Spartan's bitter about extremity of Greeks (7)
- Openings of English plants during Spring, vary (6)
- Painting most of green bed? No time (6)
- Rook in grass, or some other bird (5)
- Forward sign of Spring, it's said (5)
- Enjoying Spring in festive Castle (7)
- Outgoing types, you might say (7)
- Arrange treat (5)
- Weathers ease around island at onset of Spring (7)
- Woman has say, ripped off in shop (9)
- Discharge energy with work (8)
- Characteristic of a traditional chair? (6-10)
- Odd cow amongst Spring's Alpine scenes (8)
- Londoner is involved with rig: it should promote an attachment (9,4)
- Radiant face of Spring - before dark (6)
- Devotion evoked by star without measure (6)
- Set off for college in time (8)
- Mineral, yellow one, clogging pipe (8)
- Robust leaves, returning, staple feature of greenery (9)
- Devoted regular (8)
- Location in which one wretched plot came to fruition (6,2,10)

DOWN

- Like tops of cherry in bud, about Easter (7)
- They're progressive to some degree (14,7)
- Audibly drunk before ten, maybe he'll get lectured (7)
- Pipe from root, I gathered (4)
- Instruments with mouth-pieces (6)
- Count upon former Conservative getting into favour (6)
- Poaching eggs? (5,7)
- Belief that 'Soul' is inherent in 'Rock'? (7)
- With vessel upcycling, one turns around for life preservers (9)
- Stone form decapitated in secret manoeuvre (7)
- Spring's confirmed by movements in Aries (5)
- Factor in mature holy writ (5)
- Submit drink is causing gut problem (9)
- Look for castles around Italy (4)
- They're so class-conscious (14)
- Precursor of the Jumbo type? (7)
- A republic responsible for famous Easter tide antic (6,6,2,7)
- Spring quietly drifting over Southern fields (4)
- A patch, but easy to cultivate with grass (6,4)
- Bird's pecked top off rue (5)
- Draws home with dogs (6)
- Mad hares, at last, features of Spring (7)
- Grand ancient plants bordering very good glowing views (6,8)
- Fruits (not April's first) and birds from abroad (7)
- Produced tangle? Rambling red rose did (10)
- Growth on trees, in raised grounds, fed by sap (7)
- Sword is lifted, heralding short expression of dismay (7)
- Draws home with dogs (6)
- They'll find us going after clipped pot flower in Spring (6)
- Isca's ultimate grounds for betrayal (7)
- Hands over eggs when told (5)
- Spore's active spell, promoting recovery (12)
- Picture of Eastside - asphodels (4)
- Hearts in sporadic bursts, full of the joys of Spring (9)
- The primate sounds partisan (9)
- Shower gets me, abroad, then clears up (7)
- Hacks nettles (4)
- Sister's standing, with Parisian, in new bonnet (5)
- Small band's entered festivity (7)
- Bright disc seen from bridge over most of valley (7)
- One winding lane fellow finds verdant (2,4)
- Time (Spring) will generate any collection of plant cells (6)
- Reveal Paul's last letter's turned up (3,2)
- He's from Bern? Stuttgart (5)
- Highest tree needs lopping (4)



- Both eggs plain to see (anag) (9,9)
- Parcels goods before retail (8)
- Reverberation (9)
- Widespread (8)
- Type of lid (5,3)
- Demand (6)
- American state (6)
- Flimsy (13)
- Happy state (8)
- Come off best (4,3,4,5)
- A fish (8)
- Set in motion (9)
- Castilian nobleman (7)
- A fight (3,2)
- Prickly plant (7)
- Trade ban (7)
- Engaged (5)
- Block of metal (5)
- Morsel (6)
- Spite (6)
- Reactionary person (4,3)
- Backache (7)
- Nag her (anag) (6)
- Rivulet (6)
- Portents (5)
- Scandinavians (5)
- Not so dense (7)
- Castle (7)
- Lock (5)
- Avidly (7)
- Transient (9)
- Marinating (8)
- An aid in solving crimes (8,8)
- Burgess (8)
- Attack soccer player (6-7)
- Without clothes (6)
- Nuptial (6)
- Moderising (8)
- Remove from a fixed position (8)
- Industrial waste (5,4)
- To loiter aimlessly (8)
- Near blue sea's margin (anag) (18)
- Desert plants (3)
- Tomb (9)
- Old Greek com (4)
- In a showy manner (14)
- Banner'd material (7)
- Thomas Hardy novel (5,3,9,4)
- Opposed to (4)
- Gives prominence to (10)
- Sit on a perch (5)
- Free from obligation (6)
- Throw into confusion (7)
- Genially (4-10)
- Suppressed (7)
- A table herb (sing) (10)
- Abhors (7)
- Block of houses (7)
- Northern Irish county (6)
- Runner-up (4-3)
- Arrangement (3,2)
- Emphasising (7,5)
- Compass point (4)
- In force (9)
- Hot in yard (anag) (9)
- Spanish princess (7)
- European currency (4)
- Mark under a letter (7)
- Prion disease of sheep (7)
- Supports for broken bones (7)
- Skin disease (6)
- Bother (6)
- Knott's (5)
- Bad-tempered (5)
- Snatch (9)

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Why Mandy won't come out to play



JOHN
LYTTEL

AT AN editorial conference here on Tuesday morning, a member of staff looked askance at that day's Oliver James column on Peter Mandelson and wondered why James had outed Mandelson as a homosexual. Came the reply: Oliver James hadn't. That dirty deed was committed some time ago by the *New of the World*, for obvious odious reasons.

And, no, James wasn't slyly exploiting tabloid affronts to privacy and decency. He has points to make. Unlike Bryan Gould's autobiography, which reviled Mandelson as "queeny", giving the Sun the chance to run

"Gould 'Outs' Mandelson" in hypercritical, tut-tut tones. And, as a matter of record, *Gay Times* often mentions Mandelson's sexuality and has not once been rebuked by the man himself, or his office. Indeed, relations have always been very cordial, even up to the last election, when *Guy Times'* request for an in-depth interview was very cordially rejected.

Still, one realises why the staff member raised the question - the Minister Without Portfolio's homosexuality exists in a limbo between secret, open secret and historical amnesia: everyone is apparently aware of it without being quite certain how - and also why Peter Mandelson declined to be interviewed by *Guy Times*. Mandelson clearly doesn't want his sexuality to be anything other than his own business. He does not wish it to be a dreary "issue", a punctured political football, a broken stick to beat himself or the Party or the Blessed Tony with. It might be... awkward.

New Labour has been at some pains to present itself as "gay-friendly", and no matter how currently cosy the Government's arranged marriage with the *Mail Times* etc, in the right-wing press, tradition and prejudice (much the same thing) forever translate the liberal sentimentality of gay-friendly into the sinister suggestion of Gay Mafia.

The fact that New Labour's "gay-friendliness" has extended to fighting against gays in the military and equal partnership rights in the European Courts would seem to dismiss such a paranoid Polaroid of Mandelson and Co's influence, but facts, naturally, don't come into it. Knowing this, why add to your own burdens or allow unnecessary obstacles to be placed in the path of possible political progress for gay men and women? All round, best to maintain a dignified silence. Which is, after all, a matter of choice.

Except Peter Mandelson

has no choice. Whatever the personal and/or professional motives for keeping Mum (the good people of his Hartlepool constituency? the still-burning embers of Labour's butch, blue-collar boorishness? the Prime Minister? sheer boredom?) his sexuality is... Here we encounter difficulties - semantic fusal to hit need not interfere with easy sport. Watch. If I type "Mandelson and gay" into this newspaper's library database, 111 stories appear, all hints, nudges and dull, dull, dull innuendo. Richard Littlejohn doing cracks about friends of Dorothy and friends of Mandy not being mutually exclusive.

as putrid, because, as previously noted, Mandelson has already been "outed".

Would making a clean breast of it - the language of harassment is contagious - kill the smirk? No. If Mandelson were to lose the test of wills and admit - or confess, as Littlejohn would doubtlessly phrase it - then he would at some future point accuse him of "flaunting it". Catch 22. No-win situation. Cowards' methods of punishment are multifarious, as any gay man thought to have power can tell you.

Perhaps Mandelson should have a chat with Chris Smith, who lives the very opposite of his own predicament. Smith's open homosexuality is now almost never mentioned. No fun there. Instead, the utter unreasonableness of attacks on his "competence" grow. Dub it over-compensation and skin Richard Ingrams in the Observer: enraged and obsessed or what? Moral: in or out, some will always shake you all about.

Though not for much longer. The times are anti-blood sports. Smith's foes have had to drop the flag-baiting. Mandelson's queer situation may signal a last boor: no wonder name-calling hollies are making the cat-and-mouse most of it. Wouldn't it be funny if a final, mad, full-frontal attack finally gained Peter Mandelson public empathy? Wouldn't it be amazing if his enemies took note of this column in a manner they have revealingly failed to do with Oliver James' and put Peter Mandelson - and us erstwhile, inadvertent collaborators - out of their misery?

Couldn't they learn to hate Mandelson for who he is and not for what he may do in bed? Or are they far too busy gang-hanging George Michael to pay due attention?

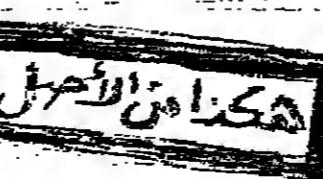
New Labour has been at pains to present itself as 'gay-friendly', but in the right-wing press, tradition and prejudice forever translate gay-friendly into Gay Mafia

(You couldn't make it up, though Littlejohn does.)

A cartoon in the *Standard* showing Mandelson on a sunny beach, surrounded by silly Muscle Marys and moustachined clones. Ken Livingstone, stalwart defender of gay rights, is vying with Mandelson for a place on the NEC, habdling in the *Guardian* about his rival's prowess as a disco bunny.

This is, of course, why everyone is apparently aware of Peter Mandelson's homosexuality without being quite certain how. Which is confusing, as well as

immortal. The fish in the barrel's re-



From next week, John Lyttle's column can be found in the Independent's second section, *The Eye*, on Thursdays

ARTS ON SATURDAY



As a TV documentary attacks the reputation of the world's greatest male ballet dancer, Louise Levine says there's no need to rubbish Rudolph.

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EDITOR: ROSIE BOYCOTT; EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: ANDREW MARR
DEPUTY EDITOR: CHRIS BLACKHURST
ADDRESS: 1 CANADA SQUARE, CANARY WHARF, LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000 OR 0171 345 2000
FAX: 0171 293 2435 OR 0171 345 2435
THE INDEPENDENT ON THE INTERNET: WWW.INDDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Israel's search for security

WHATEVER the ultimate fate of the Northern Ireland peace process may be, Stormont Castle is not, of course, the only place in the world where a "peace process" has been going on for decades. As we approach the 50th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel we see the hardest lesson of all – that it can be the years after a "settlement" that are the most dangerous. As with Ireland, history provides a key to understanding the ready diet of grievances, suspicions and a national obsession with security. It also shows us how the imperatives of security can change.

It is a little hard to recall that, a few months after the proclamation of the State of Israel in 1948, Winston Churchill told the House of Commons that this event was "one of the most hopeful and encouraging adventures of the 20th century". Indeed he went on to warn the hasty historians of tomorrow: "The coming into being of a Jewish State in Palestine is an event in world history to be viewed in the perspective not of a generation or a century, but in the perspective of a thousand, two thousand or even three thousand years."

Journalists are notoriously short-termists but it is possible even with such a short vantage point as a mere half-century to offer a tentative judgement on the state of the State of Israel. In brief, it is uncertain as to how much hope and encouragement for peace could be derived from the present leadership of Israel.

In fact, the first 50 years of Israel's history might best be described as a "war process". Israel was a nation born out of conflict and hatred stretching back in a truly Churchillian timescale. It certainly gained a huge momentum because of the hostility the Jewish diaspora encountered almost wherever it went. This varied from time to time and from society to society, from mild snobishness to the kind of violent state-sponsored pogroms that culminated in the Holocaust. But whilst these events resulted in waves of frightened people emigrating to Palestine (and elsewhere) it needed the guarantee of American support and the successful war of self-determination to found the nation.

Even then Israel was not secure, or at least did not feel secure, and much of her story has been a search for security. It has been a struggle between hawks and doves.

When Israel found herself in major armed conflicts with all of her neighbours in each of her five decades of existence one could understand the hawkish outlook. The wars have contributed to the Israeli perception that she is "vulnerable", "threatened" by hostile neighbours. She may, at various times, have been right. Certainly no-one could mistake the anti-Israel rhetoric of some of her enemies who wanted the state driven into the sea. Israel's story has been one where leaders like David Ben-Gurion and Golda Meir have trusted no-one and placed their faith in force. This tradition has been shamelessly exploited by the present Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. As we come to the 50th anniversary, Israel should in fact recognise the scale of her own achievements and that the time for hawkishness has passed.

The state is no longer seriously threatened by external enemies. Her alliance with the United States has been tested time and time again. She has concluded peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan. She has survived each of her armed conflicts and emerged strengthened. There are new threats to the stability of Israel, but more and more of these are "home grown", like the extremist Israeli gunman who murdered Yitzhak Rabin. Or they emerge from Israeli policy, like the West Bank settlements. The responses of the past are no longer appropriate and do not, in fact, serve Israel's best security interests, let alone justice or morality. Israel need not fear ending the oppression of the Palestinian people and the creation of a fully independent Palestinian state.

The Israeli anthem for the 50th anniversary runs: "Together in pride / Together in hope". As in Northern Ireland, we hope that the Israelis will soon work to add "Together in peace".

Courts martial on trial

WHO could resist the story of bonking under cover of the noise of jump-jets landing and taking off? We may not think we ought to be interested, and we must all be sure that it does not matter, but the vast majority of newspaper readers have followed the case of the "officer and the Wren" with rather more attention to detail than, say, the Government's deliberations on the question of trade union recognition.

Yesterday, Lieutenant-Colonel Keith Pople was acquitted by a court martial of prejudicing military discipline and scandalous conduct. What he and Lieutenant-Commander Karen Pearce got up to hardly qualifies as a scandal these days, but it was gripping stuff on the border between soft porn and gossip. But military discipline had not been compromised, and in that sense the court martial produced the right verdict.

If two grown-ups want to do as he described them – foolish things in private, then that should not be a matter for any kind of court, even if they are married. The forces' ban on adultery is out of date and counter-productive.

The only issue which could concern discipline is one which is not limited to the forces. Sexual relations between superiors and subordinates can be unwise, and they can be exploitative. But Lt-Cdr Pearce is not anowering rating; she is one of the most senior women in the Navy. The court martial panel concluded that she and Lt-Cdr Pople had effectively worked as equals, and that he did not have the chance to influence her career.

More generally, however, and to the extent that the law does govern sexual relations, in the fields of sex equality, harassment and rape, then surely all cases should be heard in the civil courts, and not in historical reliefs retained in the services and the church.

Then this case would not have been brought, as it should not have been. We would lose a "good read", but avoid a lot of collateral damage in the process.



Independent Scotland?

I WAS fascinated by Donald Macintyre's article on the problems raised by Scottish devolution (Comment, 7 April).

How important is the Union? Politically, 18 years of Conservative majorities in England and Labour majorities in Scotland indicate that so long as New Labour keep Middle England sweet, Scotland is irrelevant. Economically, Scotland's mix of export-dependent manufacturing and agricultural industries means a strong pound is hitting harder. An independent economic policy based on stronger European links therefore becomes more attractive to business.

Culturally, the devolution gamble is that a Scottish Parliament will not lead to a greater sense of shared identity amongst "people who live in Scotland" (as Alex Salmond very carefully put it recently), but will allow a greater participation by Scotland in British government.

Frankly, I doubt if devolution will work. The impulse towards Scottish independence is not based on ethnic nationalism, but on the awareness that the United Kingdom does not meet the standards required of a modern democracy. A federal UK might, but such a possibility is not being offered.

Sixty-two per cent of people living in Scotland now believe that Scotland will become independent within the next 15 years. Rather than fight to hold on to the status quo, would it not be more sensible for people living in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to treat Scottish independence as an opportunity to extend their own democratic freedoms through some form of federal government?

ALISTAIR LIVINGSTON
Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire

Sentencing paedophiles

I ASSUMED that all civilised people subscribed to the view that sentences should be proportionate to the offence of which the accused was convicted, not some notional propensity to commit crime in the future.

No doubt the public need pro-

tection from paedophile offenders but this is already catered for in the Criminal Justice Act 1991 s2 (2) (b). What the Home Secretary seems to be proposing (report, 7 April) is little short of internment without trial. If a judge sets a sentence which he believes reflects the seriousness of the crime and the need to protect the public, on what grounds can that be extended?

No-one doubts that these offences are among the most heinous; few, if any, would argue with the idea of enforced continuing treatment and support for the offenders; even fewer would argue that current sentences could not be more severe.

However, let us not abandon the all-important principles on which sentencing is based. Keeping someone in prison after they have served their proper sentence is simply wrong and we do ourselves no favours if we ignore that for this year's most-hated crime.

STEPHEN TURKSON
London SE5

British Jews not perfect

GERALD KAUFMAN is also absolutely right ("Kaufman attacks 'pompous' Jewry", 8 April). The Board of Deputies of British Jews is to add to its arsenal of adjectives, an amorphous and largely pointless body, quite unrepresentative of British Jewry as a whole, most of whom have never heard of it.

How regrettable, then, that the one way in which they do represent us is in the perpetuation of Anglo-Jewry's tired and clichéd "poor me" mentality, our seeming inability to accept criticism of anything Jewish or Israel-related, and worse, our constantly confusing anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism and screaming anti-Semitic and screaming anti-

Sadlers themselves faced. Most of them self-inflicted, of course. Charging into battle with a red cross on a white front is about as provocative as you can get – and provides the best possible target! No, we're going to be more subtle than that...

"How many of you will there be?"

"Six... maybe a few more..."

"But surely..."

"We only took four of us when we recruited Hannibal crossing the Alps. It was quite enough. Nobody spotted us."

"Did you take elephants?"

"The man took round.

"We're trying to keep it as secret as possible. We don't want the infidel to know we're coming. But if you should happen to read next week that the Arabs and Jews have both been evicted from Jerusalem, you can remember this conversation."

"Won't there be immense practical difficulties?" I said.

"Well, nothing as had as what the Cru-

elous government are called to account.

The Jewish community in this country is both divided and dwindling – our numbers are so much smaller than our strong presence would make it seem – and the Board of Deputies, with their incessant whingeing and posturing, do nothing to improve the situation. As Passover approaches, and with it tales of great Jewish heroes of the past, it really is high time we Jews removed the communal chip from our hypersensitive shoulder and accepted that, contrary to every Jewish mother's protestation, we're not perfect.

PETER MOSS
Edgar, Middlesex

his ruinous government are called to account.

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A fair share for London

YOUR article "London overshadows regions in fight for funds" (7 April) discussed government expenditure going to London. It seems rather disingenuous not to mention the income that London in turn gives to the Treasury. The net difference is substantial.

Government figures show £4,228 expenditure per head to London. Until the Government publishes figures showing exactly where money is spent, we must rely on other estimates, which show that London actually subsidises the rest of the UK to the tune of £6bn.

However, as your article states, investment figures on London can be justified on the basis of social deprivation alone – 14 of the 20 poorest local authority districts in England are in London. I think it would be hard for anyone to call us greedy for wanting London's fair share.

STEPHEN O'BRIEN
Chief Executive

London First

London SW1

his ruinous government are called to account.

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An Irish lesson – look to the last power-sharing agreement

DAVID
MCKITTRICK

THE THREAT FROM
ULTRA-LOYALIST

IF HISTORY is any guide in Northern Ireland – and it all too frequently is – the greatest threat to a new agreement will come not from republicanism but from the further shores of loyalism. While the governments and most parties will be pushing hard for public backing for a new deal, a motley array of loyalist paramilitaries and politicians is intent on using violence, political means and street activity to bring it down.

They did it before. Unionists and nationalists once before united in an attempt to make a fresh start in Northern Ireland, in the Sunningdale agreement of 1973-74, in a deal eerily similar in many respects to that which is now on the table. It was halted a new dawn; but in the face of concerted Protestant wrath and a loyalist general strike, it lasted less than five months.

The Point of No Return, Robert Fisk's book on that extraordinary episode, was aptly subtitled: "the strike which broke the British in Ulster". It was highly accurate in that it was over a decade before a British government plucked up the courage to take a fresh initiative in the face of the disengagement after the strike. There have been many changes since then, yet a surprising amount of the political grammar remains intact.

What the British and Irish governments are now engaged in has been called "Sunningdale Mark 2", and even "Sunningdale for slow learners". Success in the enterprise will depend on the hope that many people have learned many lessons since that first time around.

Sunningdale was a political initiative on an epic scale. For 50 years, Northern Ireland had been controlled by the Unionist party, which enjoyed an unbroken run of one-party rule at Stormont. Then Edward Heath swept it away in 1972, concluding after Bloody Sunday that it was unrefutable. Heath and the first Northern Ireland Secretary, William Whitelaw, then spent most of 1972 and most of 1973 trying to put together a scheme that might be characterised as Stormont with Catholics. It came in two installments.

The first, in late 1973, was the announcement that Unionist leader Brian Faulkner and the SDLP had agreed to form a coalition to run a new assembly. The executive was composed of six Unionists, four SDLP ministers, and one from the middle-of-the-road Alliance party. That was the powersharing executive; next came what was known as "the Irish dimension". This was hammered out over several days and nights at a conference centre at Sunningdale, in Berkshire, with Heath pushing for agreement in late-night sessions much like Tony Blair's efforts in Belfast this week.

The result, known as the Sunningdale agreement, provided for a new Belfast-Dublin Council of Ireland with functions similar to that of the cross-border body now on the table. When Faulkner wrote in his memoirs that "the problem seemed to be the executive and harmonising functions of the Council of Ministers", he could have been describing the issue that proved so contentious this week.

The new executive came into office in January 1974, with Faulkner as chief exec-

utive and John Hume as minister for commerce. In those days, Sinn Féin did not exist as a political force; but the IRA fortunately dismissed the whole enterprise as an attempt to "prop up the British presence". The republicans have come a long way since those days.

But before the IRA could launch an organised assault on the deal, loyalists beat them to the punch. First, the Rev Ian Paisley and his political allies disrupted the assembly, one official recalling: "Faulkner was spat upon, jostled, reviled and shouted down. It was sad to see him spat upon by lesser men, political pygmies and procedural bullies and wild men of the woods and the bog."

Next, the February 1974 British general election produced a disastrous result, anti-powersharing Unionists winning 11 of Northern Ireland's 12 Westminster seats. Then came the loyalist strike, which was run by a committee including Unionist politicians, loyalist paramilitaries and Protestant trade unionists.

An uncertain response from the Labour government of the day gave the strikers almost complete control over electricity generation, allowing them to run down power supplies and cause frequent power cuts. A state of emergency was declared. Workers were turned back by men carrying clubs and blocking roads with hijacked vehicles; relatively little overt force was used on the streets, the paramilitary leaders finding that what one of them dryly called "intimidation without violence" was sufficient deterrent to send the workers back home.

But within days Protestant opinion swung behind the strike, and after a few weeks it became apparent that the powersharing executive, and indeed the government itself, had lost almost all authority. The Sunningdale agreement collapsed; with it went

Success will depend on people having learned from Sunningdale

most of the hope for an agreed settlement; and many politically arid years followed.

That was then: this is now, and many things have changed. Protestant industrial muscle is not what it was, some of those who supported the strike – like David Trimble – now believe more in the political way that they used to, and the leaders of the major loyalist paramilitary groups say they want to talk rather than fight.

Republicans are signalling that they want to move away from violence and into politics; not everyone believes them, but the idea of a peace process has permeated the atmosphere, implanting the notion in some unlikely quarters that there may be a better way. But some things have not changed.

Mr Paisley, then as now, is gearing up for a major campaign in the politics of denunciation and the rhetoric of sell-out. While it is tempting for outsiders to dismiss him as a melodramatic anachronism, the fact is that he retains a potent appeal, two years ago taking 36 per cent of the Unionist vote. His tactic will be to create splits in the ranks of other Unionist and loyalist groups. There are already unhappy voices in Mr Trimble's own party, four of his 10 MPs being dead set against any deal; Mr Paisley will be intent on fanning such embers of dissent.

On the paramilitary front the Loyalist Volunteer Force, a fierce new outfit, will use the gun against a new agreement. They and the other deal opponents will hope to exploit the July Drumcree marching controversy to rally support.

The realignment of forces that has taken place since 1974 means there is less chance of the loyalist ultras succeeding in bringing down a deal. The fact remains, however, that they intend to try, and in doing so will provide a new deal with its sternest test.

CHARLES
ARTHUR

CLEAN SCREENS
FOR CHILDREN

PRICKING a bubble is an irresistible urge. About 18 months ago, I met the chief executive of a software company offering a new product to "filter out Internet porn". His suit, like his face, was shiny and expensive, and he was eager to boast of the fact that his product meant that children would not be able to access "pornographic" discussion groups (usually called, in the Net lingo, newsgroups).

Wary that parents will blame the teachers for what children

see on screen, the ATL has decided it's up to teachers and schools to guarantee "safe" systems are in place to protect their pupils. So the union has launched its own Internet access package for members, including a so-called "cyber patrol" facility to block off access to pornographic or racial-ly offensive sites.

The trouble with this "filtering" approach to the Internet is that you can't both revel in the usefulness of the Internet, yet try to erect fences on it. There are 320 million Web pages, expanding all the time, and even the best of the many "search engines" (which aim to be an ever-updated index of all of those) only manage to cover one-third of them.

As it's impossible to audit 320 million Web pages, any company claiming that its package blocks every site containing pornography is obviously wrong. Some packages try to filter key words from going out or coming in – which can lead to odd effects when children are doing research about breast cancer or Scunthorpe.

The private pleasure we take from observing public pain



SUZANNE
MOORE
ON SEX IN THE
NEWS, AGAIN

IT'S NEVER easy to write when you are in handcuffs but I just have to do the best I can. You see, much to my shame, I have been arrested for committing a lewd act in a public place. I just couldn't help myself. I saw the headlines and was overcome with the desire to read every single sentence I could about a certain Mr Michael and his unfortunate affair in a public lavatory somewhere in Beverly Hills. I needed to know what Elton John thought, what Boy George thought, what female readers of the *Sun* thought, what the childhood friend of George Michael who had a pretend wedding with him when she was five thought, what the shrinks thought, what the police thought, what gay groups thought ... and I admit it I just got carried away.

I became visibly aroused even though there were other people present. Nine pages in the *Sun*, five in the *Mirror* never mind all the rest. They were asking for it. It's not really my fault is it? my defence all I can say is that this is a mutually consenting relationship. I want salacious details and boy does everyone else get off on giving it to me. Staring long and hard at the vital picture of the actual vehicle in which the lewd act occurred. I assumed that I could just be left alone with these filthy secrets. Now, I suppose I can't. I have to be courted as a parasite, a voyeur of this whole sordid tale of the coupling of fame and sex in the twentieth century.

George Michael. Gay? Scoop of the century to some perhaps, though I'd say he's dropped more than a few hints in the past myself. Designer stubble anyone? Certainly it fills in the time and space while the media waits for the outcome of that unsexy old Irish peace process. Not only gay but prepared to seek illicit thrills in public toilets. Wonderful. Not only gay but actively clogging. Brilliant.

Depending on what side your bread is buttered, this all proves something. Either George is really deeply gay and has done this subconsciously to be outed and once forced out he can live happily ever after in the community of gay loneliness. Or George is deeply confused and did this disgusting thing in a lavatory because he cannot come to terms with being gay as he is a tor-



Newspaper entrapment – the coupling of fame and sex in the twentieth century

Photograph: Rui Xavier

ured artist who worries about his record sales. Or try this for size. Maybe George is gay for about five minutes at a time. Maybe his sexuality is as ambiguous as he has always claimed. Maybe sex in a toilet with a stranger is really much better than sex in the missionary position with a woman. And so what if it is?

Sex is a messy business but gay sex is sometimes as straight as you can get. After the confusion you come out of the closet which is very, very good or stay in it which is very, very bad; not only for yourself but for all

celebrities like Antoinette Turner are up for sale too. Indeed many would say she and Della have sold themselves profitably to the highest bidder.

The private lives of the unfamous are also up for grabs. As Kilday tries to set up his shows, having watched a few episodes of Jerry Springer, then it's confession a go-go. Everything is permitted, in public. In front of a camera. What he said to you one night over the phone. What you did with him in your sister's house. What happened when his wife walked in. What happened when you found that he

do it? Show me pictures of the toilet. Does George have Gaynor? I want pictures of the secret wedding. Every story is a sh... tell session and every star who wants to be a star as much as George Michael wanted it knows the deal.

He controlled his image tactfully, even acknowledging that his sexual ambiguity made him seem more fascinating, more sexy. Mysterious. Enigmatic. Elusive. There are good words if you want, as he once wanted, to be as famous as Michael Jackson. They're your asking price, make you seem a

sies of which parts of your body you rub against which parts of another body.

Have we become so sexually jaded that we can only have virtual sex through other people? Are we genuinely shocked when we find that yes, in fact, our sex symbols have sex?

It's really only one other thing to be said here, and it should have been said to George Michael just like it has to be said to the media. Put it away darling. We really don't want to see it. Run along. In order to say this however one has to mean it and none of us mean it in our hearts because we feel somehow that we have the right to see everything. In this virtual sex culture seeing is believing. Is Diana dead? Show me pictures of the body. Did George Michael

little out of reach. A little bit exciting. If your image is one of deliberate ambiguity, if you are as John Lennon sang, have "to hide your love away", the reality has to be more dull. There are only three boxes you can tick here: gay, straight, bisexual. I'm afraid it's that limited when it comes down to the basics.

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Relief as rates stay put

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

INTEREST rates will not be raised this month, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee announced yesterday, in a decision which put it under the most intense scrutiny it has experienced since its creation last May.

The announcement brought relief to home-buyers but got a grudging welcome from industry. Businesses and unions, which had lobbied vigorously against a rate rise, called for the Bank to go further and declare it would not increase the cost of borrowing in future either.

Ian Peters, deputy director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "The Governor of the Bank of England must now send a clear signal that interest rates have reached their peak."

Kate Barker, chief economist at the Confederation of British Industry, said: "It would have been better news still if the Bank of England had indicated that there was now a good chance that the next interest rate move would be downward."

The MPC's meeting was bound to be controversial because of the strength of the pound, which many people blame on the level of interest rates. Sterling's climb during the past two years has slowed down export growth, putting manufacturers under increasing pressure.

Ken Jackson, general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, called for the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee to investigate the strong pound.

"One third of manufacturing was wiped out during the recession of the 1980s. The same

will happen again if rates rise further," he predicted.

The reaction in the financial markets to the MPC's announcement was muted. The pound was almost unchanged against the German mark while the sterling index edged 0.1 lower to 107.3. Shares continued their upward trend, the FTSE 100 index climbing 50 points to 6,105.5.

City experts disagreed about whether borrowing costs should rise to cool the pace of overall growth and keep inflation on target, but most were sceptical about whether a statement of intent from the Bank would make any difference to the pound.

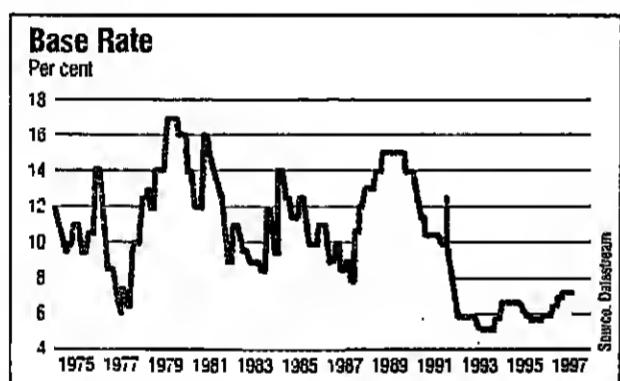
Roger Bootle, chief economist at HSBC Markets, welcomed the decision yesterday. But he said: "I'm not at all convinced that it's that easy to manipulate expectations in the financial markets."

Clarin Barr of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, one of the City hawks who reckons the Bank might now have to tighten policy next month, said: "People looking for a rate cut are in for a long wait. We're miles away from that."

The eight-person MPC has been split since January, and the latest published minutes revealed the Governor had to use his casting vote in favour of no change in February. The split has been presumed to be four-four since then, but minutes of yesterday's meeting will not be released until mid-May.

The inflation forecast in the Bank's quarterly Inflation Report next month is thought to be critical to future prospects for rates. February's report said another increase in borrowing costs was more likely than not.

Outlook, page 21
Diane Coyle, page 24



New Look valued at £300m ahead of stock market flotation in June

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent



Tom Singh: £100m stake

TOM SINGH is set to become one of Britain's richest shopkeepers in June when he floats his New Look fashion chain on the stock market with a value of £300m.

Mr Singh, who founded the business in Worthing in 1969, owns 29 per cent of the company. This will rise to 33 per cent following the float, valuing his stake at £100m.

This is on top of the £170m he and his family received three years ago when he sold a controlling stake to a group of ven-

ture capitalists including Barclay, Private Equity and PPM Ventures.

It will be the second time New Look has tried for a stock

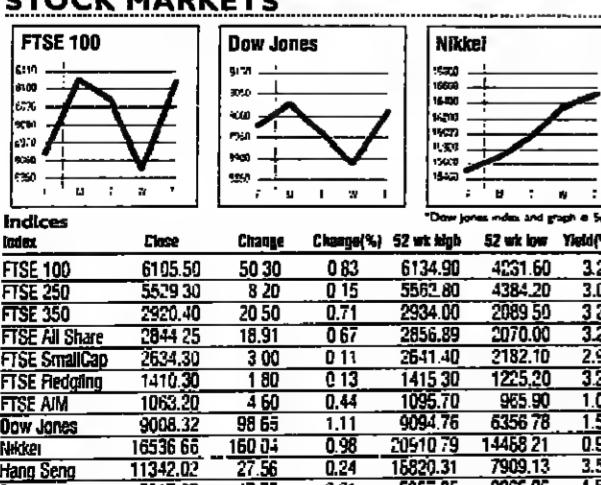
market flotation. It abandoned its first attempt in 1994 due to volatile stock market conditions. Since then, it has considered a reverse takeover of Etam and also looked at Oasis Stores last year after it issued two profits warnings.

New Look is raising £100m from the float. Half will be used to pay down debt and to redeem preference shares. The rest will be used to fund store expansion.

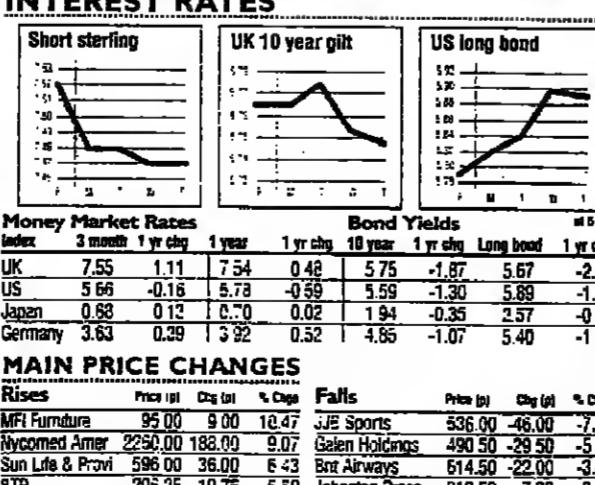
New Look has 440 stores but it wants to add a further 150, of which 50 will be in towns and cities such as Kingston-upon-Thames and Edinburgh where the company is not represented.

Investment column, page 22

STOCK MARKETS



INTEREST RATES



MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chg
MFI Furniture	95.00	9.00	10.47
Dow Jones	9008.32	98.65	1.11
Nikkei	16536.65	160.04	0.98
Hang Seng	11342.02	27.56	0.24
FTSE 100	6105.50	50.30	0.83
FTSE 250	2920.40	20.50	0.71
FTSE All Share	2844.25	18.91	0.67
FTSE SmallCap	2634.30	3.00	0.11
FTSE Hedging	1410.30	1.80	0.13
FTSE AIM	1062.20	4.60	0.44
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OUTLOOK
ON THE MONETARY
POLICY COMMITTEE'S
DILEMMA, THE
POSSIBILITY OF AN
RAC FLOAT, AND TWO
EAGERLY AWAITED
BID DECISIONS

Slump for Rolls as the old bow out

SALES of Rolls-Royce and Bentley luxury cars almost halved in the first quarter of the year as production of old four-door models was wound down and a new model introduced.

Vickers, the parent company which is in the process of selling Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, said retail sales fell to 251 cars from 446 cars in the first quarter of 1997. In Japan they fell by 81 per cent to six units. Rolls-Royce launched the Silver Seraph in March, its first new model in almost two decades.

"We have been overwhelmed by the positive reception the new Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph has received from customers and orders are coming in every day," Graham Morris, the chief executive of the car unit, said.

Vickers said quarterly sales were down as expected because of the phase-out of previous four-door models at the end of 1997 and the ramp-up of production of replacement models.

Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars, which have traditionally occupied the uppermost rung in car price ladder, have always had a limited market.

Sales surge at John Lewis Partnership stores

Sales at the John Lewis Partnership, which includes department stores and Waitrose supermarkets, rose by 19.8 per cent in the week to 4 April and were up 7.3 per cent in the nine weeks to 4 April, the partnership said yesterday.

Department store sales rose 14.1 per cent in the week to 4 April compared with the same week a year earlier, while Waitrose sales surged by almost 25 per cent in the week to April 4.

In the nine weeks to 4 April, department store sales were up 7.7 per cent on the same year earlier period.

The latest week was one of complex comparisons, John Lewis' assistant director of trading, Nigel Brotherton, said in a statement.

"The equivalent week last year was the week following Easter."

John Lewis sales rose 9.4 per cent in the week to 28 March compared with the same week a year before.



Moving images: Sales of Rolls - symbolised by the Spirit of Ecstasy emblem - fell, but are now said to be improving

continental Europe they fell to 19 from 35. In Japan, only six cars were sold during the quarter against 32 in the first quarter of 1997.

Mr Morris said sales of its existing Bentley two-door range were progressing well, with the Bentley Azure seeing a "very strong demand".

Vickers is in exclusive talks to sell Rolls-Royce to BMW for £340m. Volkswagen has increased an earlier offer and is be-

lieved to have bid between £360m and £380m and hopes to negotiate with Vickers once a period giving BMW exclusive negotiating rights ends. Daimler has ruled itself out of the running.

Bernd Pischetsrieder, the BMW chairman, has so far remained confident of winning the battle despite a higher bid from Volkswagen. Any offer has to be approved by Vickers' shareholders.

- Agencies

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

LONRHO took another step towards turning itself into a focused mining company yesterday when shareholders approved plans for the £177m purchase of Anglo-American's 21 per cent stake in the business while approving the £167m purchase of the faviot coal mine from JCL.

At an emergency meeting in central London yesterday, attended by only 100 share-

holders, the resolutions were passed by 79.3 per cent of the votes cast.

Lonrho's resolutions did not go through unchallenged. Tiny Rowland, the Lonrho founder and former chairman who has been placing adverts in newspapers voicing his criticism of the board's plans, did not attend but his solicitor appeared as his representative.

Matthew Knight raised some of Mr Rowland's points, which included questions over the board's optimism on the out-

look for the coal price and the increase in Lonrho's debts to uncomfortable levels. He also questioned why Anglo-American had sold 40 million Lonrho shares to SBC Warburg at a discount to the market price.

One private shareholder asked whether directors' pay would now be reduced as Lonrho would be a much smaller business.

Yesterday's agreement, combined with the group's plans to demerge its non-mining operations into a new company, Lonrho Africa, was a milestone on Lonrho's road to casting off its sprawling colonial conglomerate heritage and becoming a mining group with coal, platinum and gold interests in Africa.

Under the terms of the deal, Anglo-American is swapping a 21 per cent stake in Lonrho which it has held since 1968, for JCL's share in the FJ Joel gold mine and JCL's stake in platinum producer Amplats. JCL, through a transaction with Investec Bank, is then selling the Lonrho shares to Lonrho for around £176.7m.

Shareholders OK Lonrho deals

By Nigel Cope

City Correspondent

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Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, is due to make over the next week. Two bids are awaiting her go-ahead - the Texas Utilities offer for Energy Group, owner of Eastern Electricity, and the Investcorp bid for Watnoughs and BPC. Investcorp has already gone unconditional as to acceptances, while Texas is pretty much assured of success in the absence of a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

None the less, it is reasonable to have some sympathy for the dithering way in which the board and the company have dealt with the matter thus far. Associate members are going to be mighty pissed off with the idea of further enriching a lot of fusty old masons propping up the bar in Pall Mall if there's nothing in it for them. In establishing a flotation mechanism, then, the board has to ensure there's something for the customer too, or they might just desert to the competition.

In other words, the issues are not quite as clear cut as Mr Rose would like to believe. How the board is going to resolve these conflicts is anyone's guess. One for Andrew Regan of Co-op fame, perhaps. In this case, free car parking could presumably be arranged for the board over a period of confidential documents. But then again, perhaps not.

Acid tests for Mrs Blockit

AFFICIONADOS of the ins and outs of government mergers policy are awaiting with some anticipation a couple of decisions that

BTR reveals details of £2bn payout to shareholders

Industrial conglomerate BTR announced yesterday the details of its plan to return £2bn to shareholders. The company had announced the plan in March. BTR said it would return £1.5bn within the first half of this year, with the remaining £500m after April 1999. As part of the plan BTR will issue and offer one B share for every ordinary share held on May 8. The B shares will have a nominal value of 36.5p each and carry restricted preferential capital rights.

National Express airport deal

National Express Group has been selected as preferred bidder to buy a 99-year lease to operate Stewart International Airport in New York State. The train and bus operator's \$35m (£21m) bid was submitted under the US Federal Aviation Administration's PILOT privatisation programme, under which five US airports will be selected for privatisation. Stewart Airport is a regional two-runway hub located about 60 miles north of New York city. It has around 800,000 passengers a year and \$0.0001 tonnes of cargo.

Engineering unit sold

GEC Alsthom, the Franco-British energy and transport company, is buying Alcatel Alsthom's Cegelac engineering division, building up its business before an initial public offering later this year. Alcatel said in March it planned to sell the Cegelac unit to GEC Alsthom, its joint venture with GEC, as it focuses on making telecoms equipment.

Compensation scheme levy

The Investors Compensation Scheme will raise a levy of £7.49m this month on the self-regulatory organisations (SROs), who will pass the costs on to their members in due course. The ICS is the "rescue fund" for customers of investment firms which have gone out of business. The levy will fund compensation payments relating to 80 investment firms declared in default between April 1997 and March 1998. The Personal Investment Authority will pay £7.29m, while the Securities and Futures Authority will pay £20.001.

Bryant debt placement

Bryant Group has completed an \$81m private placement of 10-year senior notes to US insurance companies. The unsecured notes mature in full in April 2008. The proceeds, swapped into £49m at a 7.04 per cent fixed interest rate, have been used to repay short-term bank borrowings, it said. Bryant group said the placement was in line with long-term strategy.

James Keen

OUR ARTICLE "UBS pays £20,000 fine after breach of SFA rules" (25 September 1996) reported the outcome of disciplinary proceedings brought by the Securities and Futures Authority against UBS and two of its traders, one of whom was James Keen. We wish to make it clear that the SFA did not suggest that Mr Keen had deliberately concealed losses, conducted secret trades, or that he acted dishonestly in any way. We regret our report suggested otherwise and we have apologised to Mr Keen and paid his legal costs and appropriate damages.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
AFA Systems (P)	0.325m	0.364m	1.501p	1.0
Blagdon Industries (P)	224.8m	240.5m	11.51p	1.0
BS Group (P)	7.28m	8.12m	-0.198p	1.42m
Garton Engineering (P)	20.34m	29.08m	1.56m	1.25p
Leads Holdings (U)	9.542m	10.411m	-0.272m	1.176p

(P) Profit; (U) - Income; 1 EPS is pre-exceptional

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Reassurance for LLP float

LLOYD'S List Publishing (LLP) is sailing towards the stock market with a full head of steam. Since the management bought the business from the Lloyd's of London insurance market, turnover has grown rapidly and profits before tax and interest have almost doubled to £10.3m.

That may seem strange for a group whose flagship brand is *Lloyd's List*, which is no doubt a must read for the shipping and insurance industry but hardly flies off newagent's shelves. However, over the last few years LLP has turned itself into a much more diversified group, using its strong brand name to start up new titles, branch out into book publishing and conferencing and develop a powerful shipping database. The new management has also wielded the corporate knife to push margins up to an impressive 21 per cent.

Most of the cost cutting has already been completed but LLP should be able to continue to grow revenues briskly by putting its titles on the internet and expanding into electronic publishing. Just as importantly the flotation will give the group the chance to make acquisitions and reduce its onerous debt burden.

LLP has been priced at 285p a share, putting it on a historical p/e of 22. While not cheap, the stock has been valued on a discount to rivals such as *Metal Bulletin*, *Reuters* or *Reed* which trade on multiples in the mid to high-twenties. That should ensure that the shares get off to a good start when the group launches on the stock market on 17 April.

Banking on US deals

SO IS the bubble ever going to burst in the UK banking sector? As soon as the bull run in UK banking stocks started to

Lloyd's List Publishing: At a glance

Market value: £137.5m, placing price 285p

Three-year record 1995 1996 1997

Turnover (£m) 37.8 40.5 48.4

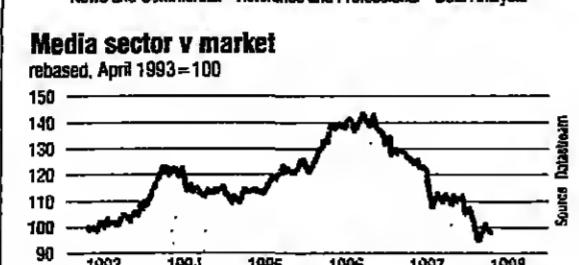
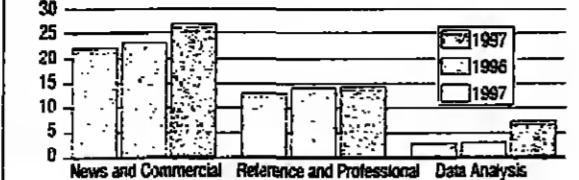
Pre-tax profits, before interest (£m) 5.6 7.6 10.3

Earnings per share (p) - 12.9

Dividends per share (p) -

Operating profit by division

£m's



grind to a halt, news of yet another merger injected new life into the shares.

Following the announcement earlier this week of a £100bn mega-merger between Travelers and Citicorp, the UK financial services giants, UK banking shares soared. But, as the week has gone on, the pace of trading has slowed, and with good reason. There is no logical argument why UK banks should be at all affected by the deal.

Take the retail banks. There are certainly growing commercial pressures for the industry to consolidate. But that has more to do with the influx of competition from the likes of supermarkets and hungry competitors such as Virgin than the Travelers-Citicorp deal.

What about the UK's rapidly dwindling number of merchant banks? The argument here is that a bank has to be a global player to survive. Even if this is true, it is hardly relevant to the UK.

close seems to suggest the peak could come sooner rather than later. Buyers beware.

New Look arrives at last

NEW LOOK, the women's fashion retailer, has been threatening to come to the stock market for so long that owner Tom Singh must feel a huge sense of relief now that his time has finally come. It had to pull its float four years ago due to wobbly market conditions. And in the last 18 months it has considered a reverse takeover of Etam and Oasis when they hit problems.

New Look is certainly an impressive growth story. Its store numbers have grown from 150 to 400 in five years and annual profits have shown 50 per cent compound growth over the same period. It prices its garments keenly for those who love a bargain and, with short lead times, it can order more of good sellers and cut its losses on those that bomb.

Management has been threatened considerably with the appointment of Howard Dyer from Hamley's as chairman. Jim Hodgkinson from Kingfisher as chief executive and Tony Colver from Alders as finance director. Trading is also good. New Look made profits of £33m on sales of £282m last year. And in the first quarter of this year like-for-like sales are up 9 per cent.

So far so good. The problem is that New Look could be one of a timing and here, one is almost tempted to question the quality of the advice. The retail sector is extremely fragile at the moment with fashion particularly weak after a shock profits warning from Next and Oasis' problems still fresh in the memory. Monsoon made the mistake of pricing its stock too highly in December and its shares have rarely risen above the issue price since.

New Look has a good story to tell investors but it will have to be priced keenly if it is not to suffer the same fate.

Sale gives Blagden £160m war chest

BLAGDEN Industries, the diversified industrial group, yesterday said it had a war chest of about £160m for organic growth and acquisitions after announcing it was selling its packaging unit for £95m.

David Roache, finance director, said: "We are not about to spend money tomorrow or get on the bandwagon that appears to be running in the speciality chemicals sector of paying excessively high prices for businesses."

He said the group has already targeted a number of potential acquisitions in the £50m-£80m range.

"We are not going to spend money on businesses that are going for 18 times earnings," he said. "If it takes us time to buy a business with growth potential at a sensible price then it takes us time."

Blagden will sell the packaging unit to Drum Holdings in a move that makes it the latest UK company to focus on its speciality chemicals.

It said it would receive £82.6m in cash, while Drum would assume £6.5m in Blagden debt and other monies. Drum is an investment company established by NatWest Equity Partners and Union Bank of Switzerland.

By selling the division, which makes up nearly 60 per cent of sales, Blagden will generate resources to boost investments in an area analysts said has become increasingly attractive in recent years.

Other chemical companies including Elementis, Laporte and ICI have shed major assets in the last year to build speciality operations, a diverse business that makes raw materials for food, consumer products, car paint and other manufacturing.

Blagden shares surged 39p or 18 per cent to close at 188.5p.

The UK and European speciality chemicals industry has seen a spate of corporate activity in recent years as companies move to position themselves in what they see as more profitable ends of the industry. The largest deals were ICI's purchase of Unilever's chemical assets for £4.8bn and Clariant's purchase of Britain's third-biggest chemical company.

Blagden said that when the sale was completed it would focus activities on its growing speciality chemical businesses by reinvesting the proceeds to accelerate the organic growth and to finance the acquisition of a new chemicals business. Blagden's packaging business is a leading supplier of steel drums to the European oil and steel industry through seven new plants in the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Spain. It makes or reconditions more than 10 million steel drums a year, the second-biggest such company in Europe.

Blagden reported a 12 per cent increase in pre-tax profits before exceptional to £16.4m in the year to the end-December 1997. The consensus analyst forecast was for pre-tax profit of £16.5m. Sales dropped to £224.5m from £240.5m, which it said was "largely due to exchange translation impact of £22.1m". The company boosted its dividend to 3.6p from 3.2p a year earlier.

— Agencies

Three-way
bid tussle
for Baring
Tribune

By Les Paterson

EMBATTLED Baring Tribune Investment Trust became the subject of a three-way bid tussle yesterday when Edinburgh Fund Managers (EFM), together with one of its investment trusts, made a bid for the company.

Baring Tribune said it had received an approach from EFM and Edinburgh UK Tracker Trust which "might or might not lead to an offer".

The trust has already been approached by Legal & General and Fleming Claverhouse, and a decision is expected by the end of the month.

Baring Tribune's problems started at the end of last year when the investment trust, which has been trading at a discount to its asset value, was targeted by Advance UK, a venture fund. After buying up large chunks of Baring Tribune's shares, Advance UK tried to force the investment trust to convert into a unit trust. This would allow shareholders to realize the full value of the underlying assets.

Advance UK's proposals were voted down in a shareholders meeting.

JJB falls further amid sportswear worries

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

SHARES in JJB Sports, the sports retailer, fell another 46p to 536p yesterday as speculation continued that the sportswear market is suffering from weak sales. The shares have now lost 35 per cent of their value since their 822.5p peak just five weeks ago.

Shares in rivals were also weak. Blacks Leisure lost 10p to 382.5p while John David Sports gave up a further 2.5p to 111.5p. Much of the volume in JJB stock appeared to be small investors, possibly reacting to a "sell" re-

commendation in an investment magazine. This prompted Simon Cawkwell, the bear raider known in the market as Evil Knievel, to close a large short position in the stock.

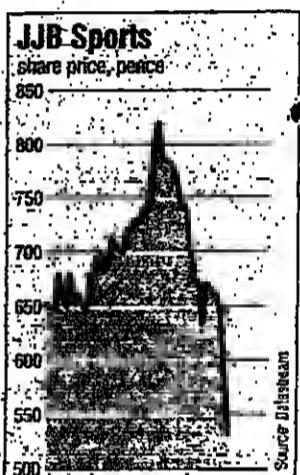
He said yesterday that he first started short-selling (selling stock he does not yet own and buying it back later at a lower price) when the JJB share price was around 750p in mid-March.

Yesterday he bought back a line of stock at 560p which he had sold at 597p. "The market is clearly very nervous about margins in this industry but enough is enough," he said.

JJB reports full year results

on 22 April, with broker SBC Warburg expecting £33.5m against £20.7m the previous year. The company would not comment on its own trading ahead of its results. However, it attributed the weakness in its share price to profit-taking due to investor nervousness about the retail sector after the Next profits warning.

Other factors, the company said, could include the statements allegedly made by Newcastle United directors that replica football shirts were over-priced and rumours that Sports Division, the sports supermarket operator, might delay its flotation.



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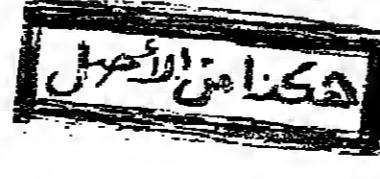
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Industry is hurting, but it's only one side of the story



DIANE
COYLE
ON WHY THE
MPC CANNOT
PLEASE
EVERYBODY

THEIR has been a respite for all those lamenting the forthcoming destruction of manufacturing at the hand of Gordon Brown and the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, as the MPC decided yesterday to leave the cost of borrowing unchanged for another month.

The extent of lobbying of MPs, ministers and officials that has been taking place during the past few weeks is not to be underestimated, and the Chancellor deserves a special bravery award for standing by his determination to steer policy for the long-term stability of the economy.

It will be some time before we know whether the MPC's members wobbled this week in the face of the industrial onslaught, with a six-week delay before publication of the minutes of the latest meeting. They will shed fascinating insight into how much the committee has weighed considerations of growth in the export-reliant parts of the economy against the inflation target.

Most Bank-watchers believe the MPC remained split down the middle over a difficult and "finely balanced" de-

cision as to whether rates should rise or remain unchanged. The next tactic from the industry lobby, however, is to start arguing for a reduction in interest rates. The weaker the figures for manufacturing output become month by month, the more voices will call for a rate cut, no matter how much the rest of the economy is decelerating.

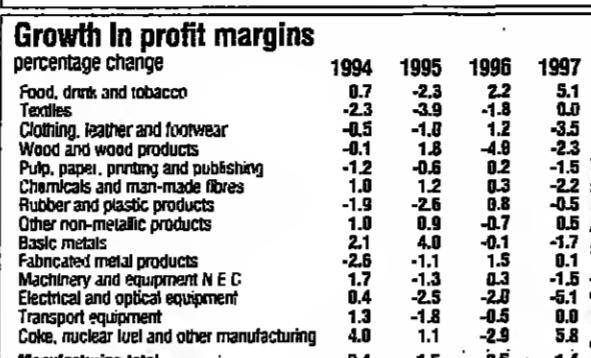
Yet, hard as it might be to believe from the uproar, there is no serious problem with the general macro-management of the economy. Kenneth Clarke should have raised interest rates a bit more before the election last May, so the Bank has had to raise them more since. But by past standards, both fiscal and monetary policy are looking about right.

The Government's finances are heading towards balance at an acceptable pace and squeezing demand as much as can be reasonably expected from elected politicians voted in on a dual pledge not to raise taxes while improving public services. Loan and mortgage rates are also pretty close to where they ought to be: nobody is seriously arguing for a big rise – or fall – in their level, only for a quarter or half-point change.

Getting it about right is the best that can be expected in the face of enormous uncertainties about economic prospects, and better than we have often managed in the past in this country.

Rather, the problem is one of "balance" or the mixed fortunes of different bits of the economy. This has been exacerbated by the strong pound, but not created by it. Manufacturing is in a steady decline as a share of the economy, and has been for at least 25 years.

Managing decline is no fun. And within manufacturing, some industries have proved much less able than others to adjust in the switch to high value-added production necessary to survive. While parts of engineering and food manu-



Source: Datastream, *Financial Times*

facture have generally coped well, textiles and metal bashing see extinction looming. Every episode of sterling strength wipes out a bit more of the production base in these failing sectors. Who can blame them for their lobbying?

A detailed new report from Paribas, the investment bank, sheds some light on which parts have the most reason to complain. In the aggregate, the figures show that times are getting harder for manufacturers – but are not yet exacerbating.

Production growth has slowed since September and is now flat. Export margins have shed their post-September 1992 gains because of falling export prices, but total profit margins in manufacturing have so far continued to increase. Employment has been rising too, according to the latest data.

The authors, Roger Beedell and Corey Miller, are actually very pessimistic about prospects for industry in the

aggregate. But the detail shows widely varying performances. Two big sectors – food, drink and tobacco, and engineering – are still growing at a reasonable pace, the latter mainly thanks to aerospace and transport equipment.

On the other hand, production in textiles, clothing and footwear, basic metals and wood products is falling at an uncomfortable clip. The first chart shows the gap that has emerged in production performance.

The Paribas analysis also shows that different sectors vary in their exposure to a slowdown in exports to Asia as a result of the troubles there. For example, more than a third of the tobacco industry's exports go to the region, but it accounts for only 5 per cent of the exports of rubber and plastics.

The textiles and clothing sector is vulnerable to import competition as a result of the fall in the Asian currencies against the pound, but it also

gets a boost from cheaper imports of its materials.

All in all, profit margins within manufacturing span a wide spectrum. The real pain at present is being suffered by the clothing and textile industry and by electrical equipment makers – both in different ways suffering from greater overseas competition.

The former simply has too many competitors in emerging economies with much cheaper labour costs. Its decline is probably terminal. The latter is seeing overcapacity in some products, such as computer components, due to heavy investment in a small number of other countries driving down prices. Investment cycles can be uncomfortably long but they eventually work themselves out.

Weaker manufacturing will of course eventually have an impact on the service industries as well. It is likely to spill over first into retailing and transport. The Paribas research suggests that other services are substantially less sensitive to a downturn in manufacturing, with an overall effect of an eventual 0.4 per cent drop in services output for every 1 per cent drop in manufacturing output.

But with different services also growing at vastly different rates from booming business services, finance and IT to the rather more subdued retailing and no-growth public sector services, the Bank of England has no choice but to look at the averages. This will suit some businesses a lot more than others.

The trouble is that in the policy debate the booming sectors are not bothering to demand higher interest rates to cool down their pace of activity. They are rather enjoying their boom. Only one side of the argument is being presented on the public stage – and what a melodrama it is turning out to be.

d.coyle@independent.co.uk

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILCOCK



SIR Rhodes Boyson, the bearded former headmaster and Tory politician, has joined the chum Desmond Bloom on the board of Manx & Overseas, an AIM-listed electrical retailer on the Isle of Man which Mr Bloom plans to turn into a property trading business.

Sir Rhodes, now retired after 23 years as a Member of Parliament, has always had two non-executive directorships ever since he left politics.

"I'm an economist, although most people think of me as an educationalist," he says. He has sat on the board of Blacks Leisure since 1987, when his friend, chief executive Simon Bentley, asked him to join. "I like these things where you look forward to turning up," he says.

"I've known Des Bloom for upwards of 20 years. He wanted me to come on this (Manx). The City is an interesting place. This will broaden my interest," he says.

The former acolyte of Margaret Thatcher adds: "I ran a dining club when I was in politics, of which Des was a member. I'm not coming to this cold."

He does admit, however, that commercial property trading is new to him. He isn't looking for any other directorships, he says. "I don't collect them like medals."

Sir Rhodes is also embroiled in writing a book about the contemporary political scene, which takes between two and six hours of his day. He concludes: "I need some discipline. That's a good thing for a headmaster to say."

ROYAL and SunAlliance has ended up dealing with the insurance claim for Tracy Edwards' de-masted round-the-world yacht – the very yacht that the insurance company has been sponsoring.

In fact, Royal & SunAlliance owns the yacht – called, appropriately enough, *Royal & SunAlliance*.

Understandably, the company is chary about discussing the cost of the attempted circumnavigation of the globe. The original budget for Tracy and her 10-strong crew in their attempt to capture the *Trophee Jules Verne* was a cool £4.25m.

Now the crew has returned to Britain after the mast broke in heavy seas. The yacht is in Chile awaiting a new mast, which will have to be made in the UK or France.

So has the project bust its budget? A spokesman for the company says: "We haven't done the sums. It's turned into an insurance claim, and we are the lead insurers."

It will be fascinating to see how strict they will be with themselves.

FOUR DIRECTORS at Flying Flowers have sold shares in the company worth around £5m, just days after they bought Stadley Gibbons in an all-paper bid.

The airborne florists' chief executive Tim Dunningham sold 400,000 ordinary shares in the company at a price of 550p each, trousering a cool £2.200,000.

Walter Goldsmith, the company's chairman, sold £165,000-worth. Mr Goldsmith is a highly active entrepreneur, being a director of Betterware, Fitness First and Self Sealing Systems International. He is also a former director-general of the Institute of Directors and a director of more companies than you could shake a stick at.

Bringing up the rear, Flying Flowers' directors David Nightingale and Tom Walker sold £550,000 and £174,185-worth of shares respectively.

You can hardly blame the directors, though. Flying Flowers floated at 155p two years ago and the share price has taken flight since then. They eased 5p yesterday to close at 557.5p.

I HEAR CSFB has issued an edict to their new ex-BZW staff along the lines that all front line troops must be in work by 6.30am in the morning and lunchbreaks are not to be spent outside the building. It's a hard life being an investment banker these days.

ANY TAKERS for 3.20 German marks to the pound? According to Morgan Stanley, sterling fails the "Martian" test. Ravi Bulchandani writes: "It would be hard to prove to a Martian that sterling is obviously overvalued at current levels."

Mr Bulchandani names the obvious factors such as the balance of payments, buoyant demand and high level of manufacturing activity. Then he goes on: "The 'general buzz' associated with New Labour, the fact that UK economic policy-making stands out for its quality – particularly in a euro-obsessed European context – and substantial improvements such as the independence of the central bank, all add up to a suggest a very favourable macro-economic backdrop for investment in UK PLC."

All very well, but surely a Martian would just zap the lot of us?

BATH Press's former non-executive chairman, Tony Fisher, has retired from the board, the company said yesterday. Mr Fisher agreed to remain as a non-executive director for the past year following the appointment of Sir James Hama as non-executive chairman.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
UK	100.00	1.5938	Oman	0.6441	0.3950
Australia	12.603	25.572	Falkland Is.	0.2425	0.1620
Austria	1.4188	21.400	Malta	0.8407	0.6300
Belgium	1.3272	21.330	Morocco	0.7032	0.5200
Canada	2.7342	2.3693	Montenegro	1.4333	1.2204
Denmark	7.1621	1.1521	Norway	0.6345	0.5165
Egypt	1.3171	1.5331	Oman	0.6345	0.4795
Finland	1.2024	1.0765	Peru	0.4035	0.3320
France	2.0256	1.0765	Portugal	0.6345	0.5200
Germany	1.3272	1.5331	Qatar	0.6345	0.4795
Iceland	1.0921	1.2053	Russia	0.6345	0.5165
Ireland	1.2024	1.0765	Switzerland	0.6345	0.5165
Italy	1.3171	1.5331	Thailand	0.6345	0.5165
Japan	1.3171	1.5331	Tunisia	0.6345	0.5165
Malta	0.8407	0.6300	Ukraine	0.6345	0.5165
Mexico	1.4223	1.0765	Yugoslavia	0.6345	0.5165
Norway	1.2024	1.0765			
Portugal	1.3171	1.5331			
Spain	1.3171	1.5331			
Sweden	1.2024	1.0765			
Switzerland	0.6345	0.5165			
UK	100.00	1.5938			
US	1.4223	1.0765			

Interest Rates

Country	3mth	chg	1Yr	chg	2Yr	chg	5Yr	chg	10Yr	chg
UK	3.402	-0.05	4.021	-0.05	4.05	-0.05	4.05	-0.05	4.05	-0.05
Australia	10.00	-0.05	10.00	-0.05	10.00	-0.05	10.00	-0.05	10.00	-0.05
Austria	1.4188	-0.05	1.4188	-0.05	1.4188	-0.05	1.4188	-0.05	1.4188	-0.05
Belgium	1.3272	-0.05	1.3272	-0.05	1.3272	-0.05	1.3272	-0.05	1.3272	-0.05
Canada	2.7342	-0.05	2.7342	-0.05	2.7342	-0.05	2.7342	-0.05	2.7342	-0.05
Denmark	7.1621	-0.05	7.1621	-0.05	7.1621	-0.05	7.1621	-0.05	7.1621	-0.05
Finland	1.2024	-0.05	1.2024	-0.05	1.2024	-0.05	1.2024	-0.05	1.2024	-0.05
France	1.3171	-0.05	1.3171	-0.05	1.3171	-0.05	1.3171	-0.05	1.3171	-0.05
Germany	1.3272	-0.05	1.3272	-0.05	1.3272	-0.05	1.3272	-0.05	1.3272	-0.05
Iceland	1.0921	-0.05	1.0921	-0.05	1.0921	-0.05	1.0921	-0.05	1.0921	-0.05
Ireland	1.2024	-0.05	1.2024	-0.05	1.2024	-0.05	1.2024	-0.05	1.2024	-0.05
Italy	1.3171</									

US Masters: Woods begins with a buffeting as a 66-year-old former champion shoots level par to set the pace at a damp Augusta

Brewer flies flag for the golden oldies

By Andy Farrell
in Augusta, Georgia

TIGER WOODS found Augusta National pretty much as he left it twelve months ago: debris everywhere. But instead of those laid waste by his 12-stroke victory for his first US Masters last year, the course was littered with leaves and pine cones taking flight on a gusty and swirling wind yesterday.

Woods began the defence of his title by driving 40 yards past the tee shot of his playing partner, Matt Kucher, the US Amateur champion. But the 22-year-old sometimes has problems controlling his iron shots in the wind and despite having a wedge in his hands, he missed the green and had to get up and down for an opening par.

Already his run of leading the Masters had come to an end as the first man into the clubhouse was 66-year-old Gay Brewer with a level-par 72. The 1967 champion added late footnote to a career as a noted wind player by becoming the oldest competitor to match par in the Masters.

Birdies at the 16th and 17th brought Brewer his lowest score at Augusta for 15 years and the possibility for making the cut for only the 13th time in his 36 appearances here. "I am not surprised how I played," he said. His lead lasted until Paul Azinger sneaked in at one under, but Brewer's name did not disappear

as quickly down the leaderboard as is usual for the old champions who lead the field off.

Overnight rain may have may have saved the players from the hard and fast greens that they regularly have to deal with at Augusta, but the elements provided a natural counterbalance with the strength of the wind. Azinger, with a low ball flight, also revelled in the conditions and after birdieing the par-five second parred his way round.

Azinger, the 1993 USPGA champion who later that year underwent chemotherapy for a lymphoma in his shoulder, also played well in 69 on the opening day a year ago when the course played particularly firm. "I thought that was the toughest day I'd seen at Augusta until today," Azinger said. "and this was my best round since that day."

An illustration of the problems on the greens in a strong wind came at the third hole, where Azinger saw his birdie attempt from three feet slip five feet by. "The wind made it a guessing game for the most part," he added. "If it keeps up we will not have to worry about Tiger shooting 18 under again. If it had been calm, with the greens holding as they are, you might have seen a 63. If there is no wind, this course is there for the taking - but so is St Andrews and other great courses. I don't think we have to worry

Sandy Lyle, baving on Wednesday became the first man to retain the par-three title which has historically been a jinx for the main action, eagled the 13th and was one over with two to play. Lyle was playing with Craig Watson, the British Amateur champion, who was out in 41.

Before the main contenders started their campaigns in the afternoon, another Masters tradition dictates that Gene Sarazen, 96, Byron Nelson, 86, and Sam Snead, 85, all hit balls off the first tee. Snead managed a blow of 190 yards despite having come out of hospital only the day before.

The three-times Masters champion complained of feeling dizzy while being driven up from Florida on Tuesday and had to miss the champions' dinner. "At least it gave other people the chance to tell a few stories," said Jackie Stephens, the Augusta chairman.

about the course being obsolete yet."

Inevitably, one of the higher scores came from one of the newcomers, Spain's Ignacio Garrido shooting an 85. "This may be my first time here but in all the years I have watched the Masters on the television, it has never been as windy as this," he said. "It was more like the British Open than the Masters."

Much of the damage was done on the par-five 15th, where he took an 11. That equalled the highest score for the hole by Jumbo Ozaki in 87 and Ben Crenshaw last year. The Ryder Cup player found the pond in front of the green three times, first with a three-wood second shot and then with two duffed pitches.

"I thought it would be an easy three-wood but it was hard to know where the wind was coming from," said Garrido, whose father Antonio also played the Masters. "On each of those three shots which went in the water the wind felt different. I was quite happy how I was coping until then but that was a disaster."

Everyone had a story to tell. Fred Couples birdied the first three holes, gave two shots back but still got to the turn in 33. Lee Westwood matched his double-bogey start of last year, then mixed two bogeys and three birdies in his next seven holes.

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Then came the decline that undermined Pavin's confidence. Fourt on the money list in 1995 with earnings of \$1.34m (£830,000), he plunged 164 places last year with no better finish than eighth in the Mercedes Championship.

Reflecting on the troubles



Sandy Lyle, the US Masters champion 10 years ago, drives off the second tee during yesterday's first round at Augusta

Photograph: Alspor

Pavin desperate to locate missing baby

Ken Jones follows a former gunslinger of the greens aiming to reverse his sudden decline with a masterly display of firepower

IT CAN happen to the toughest of them and it has happened to Corey Pavin, his career in such disarray that he went to the first tee at Augusta National in free fall.

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that have overtaken him Pavin could not remember when form deserted him. "Last year was just terrible," he said. "Bad habits developed in my swing and I wasn't able to correct them. It got worse and worse as the year went on. I was 176th on Tour in greens in regulation and you can't play out here doing that. Not only will you be out of contention, you won't even make cuts."

This year Pavin has missed five of eight cuts, finishing no better than tied for 39th place with only \$11,155 (£7,000) in earnings, but he dismisses the theory that a change of clubs led to his problems. "If I didn't like them I wouldn't use them," he said. "Things began

to go wrong 18 months ago and I have it difficult to put them right."

Now working with an English coach, Gary Smith, who was on David Leadbetter's staff, Pavin arrived at Augusta feeling that the Masters would be another turning point in his 17-year professional career.

Going off into a cross wind that all the competitors would find troublesome, in some cases more than could be coped with, Pavin dropped a shot at the second, but made two birdies to reach the turn at one over.

Crossing to the 10th tee, Pavin felt the wind from his right and across at the wavy branches of tall pines.

Taking a similar line to his playing partner, David Toms, steady-eyed in concentration, the Californian sent his drive into the perfect position, finding the left side of a wide depression on the fairway.

Applause rippled from the gallery, but Pavin's second was less than perfect leaving him with a tricky long putt that slid seven feet past. Two from there. Back to level par.

So to Amen Corner. With expert judgement and club selection, Pavin foiled the wind with a four-iron to the 11th green that set up a comfortable two putt par.

Many have found disaster at the 12th, either finding water in front of the green or a smile on his face and the steel was stuck in his eyes.

chip back went six feet past and two putts cost him an other shot.

It was after hitting a sand wedge to two-and-a-half feet at the 15th, and despite hoing the next, that Pavin felt his game to be in much better order. "That's the best round I've played since - no I don't want to think about how long," he said after finishing one over. "That's a good score in these conditions and I'm delighted to be hitting the ball good again. Only thing was that my putter let me down."

Pavin's victory in the US Open removed the curse of being known as the best player never to win a major championship. "But this is the baby I most want," he added. There was the trace of a smile on his face and the steel was stuck in his eyes.

As a second half substitute during the 3-1 win at Ewood Park, which could increase his value.

"To wait until after the World Cup would be a gamble, because he may not play well or be could get injured," he said.

Manchester United will be at full strength for today's Premiership match with Liverpool at Old Trafford. Peter Schmeichel has been declared fit after having problems with his hamstring late in Monday's game at Blackburn and Nicky Butt looks certain to start after coming on

as a second half substitute during the 3-1 win at Ewood Park.

Philip Neville could be the player to stand down if Butt plays with Ryan Giggs and Gary Pallister set to start their first game at Old Trafford since 21 February.

The Liverpool captain, Paul Ince, believes the match is make or break for his side's title hopes. "We believe we can beat Manchester United but it's make or break - this truly is," the former United midfielder said.

Gould's route to paradise page 74

Early first-round scores from Augusta	
71	B R Brown
P Azinger	B Mayfair
72	D Ogrin
G Brewer	C Coody
J Haas	F Funk
O Browne	A Palmer
73	G Hjertstedt (Swe)
C Pavin	B Casper
B Faxon	T Aaron
S McCarron	82
T Kite	*K Bakst
L Mize	83
M Bradley	B Crenshaw
74	85
W Wood	I Garrido (Sp)
B Tway	86
*J Kribel	D Ford
75	(US unless stated, *denotes amateur).
D Toms	
T Tolles	
B Andrade	
B Hughes (Aus)	
76	

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By Mass

Thursday's solution

Football

PSV EINDHOVEN have rejected Manchester United's second bid for their Dutch international centre-back Jaap Stam.

The United chairman, Martin Edwards, flew to the Netherlands yesterday morning to make a fresh attempt to buy the defender. United are understood to have increased their offer by £3m to around £10m for Stam, who was recently voted the Netherlands' Player of the Year.

United are refusing to comment on their latest bid, but a PSV spokesman, Pedro Salazar-Hewitt, contradicted Edwards, saying: "We told Mr Edwards our point of view and he has

but that is still not enough for PSV."

Edwards said later that PSV were still considering United's offer, without saying exactly how much it was. The Dutch club do not want to lose Stam, who is under contract until 2003, and are unwilling to accept much less than their £15m asking price.

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gone back to England to think about it and talk to his people there. It's now up to him to come back to us some time in the future if he wants to and we didn't arrange another meeting."

Stam has stated he would like to move to the Premiership and join United and a number of English sides are apparently interested in him.

Salazar-Hewitt denied that PSV were holding on to Stam in the hope that his value will rise after the World Cup finals in the summer. Stam, 25, is

PSV reject higher United Stam bid

Three players fail drug tests but remain anonymous

Snooker

THREE unidentified players have failed random drug tests and will be disciplined by the game's governing body, the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association, next Tuesday. The news has come as an unfortunate moment with the World Championships beginning in Sheffield in 10 days' time.

The WPBSA yesterday refused to name the players involved. Martyn Blake, company secretary of the WPBSA, said: "It would be wrong to name the players or the circumstances behind the positive tests before the players have

had a chance to put their case. Snooker was the first professional sport to introduce an official drug testing policy in April 1985. Our procedures are thorough and fair."

The WPBSA directors David Taylor, Jim Meadowcroft and the disciplinary chairman, Bob Close, will sit in judgement in Bristol next week.

A number of players have previously been caught taking drugs. The former world champion Cliff Thorburn was fined £10,000 and banned for two tournaments after testing positive.

Yesterday's news comes less than a week after Jimmy White and Mark Gray were involved in a match at the British Open in Plymouth investigated by the WPBSA for evidence of possible match-fixing.

Betting on the first round match was suspended after Gray was backed from 11-10 to 1-3 favourite. But no further action was taken and the bookmakers paid out.

News of the positive drug tests surprised players competing in the British Open yesterday where Neal Foulds rolled back

the years to reach his first major quarter-final for four years. He upset Dominic Dale 5-4 and now meets the world champion Ken Doherty.

Earlier Doherty, who has dropped only one frame in getting to the last eight, John Higgins, the world No 2, was a 16-15 favourite. But no further action was taken and the bookmakers paid out.

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